

THE
CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

AUGUST, 1881.

Love the Debt.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A STORM IN A TEACUP.



GEORGE'S resignation created a stir in Wotton generally, but a storm in the parish church. George was popular with the poor, and with most of the Sunday School teachers. Those young ladies, indeed, who attended the Sunday School with mixed motives, not so much from love of souls generally as from love of souls swathed in cassock waistcoats, rather feared than liked him. He was cynical and satirical, they said, and they felt that he saw through and through them. But the other teachers and all the children worshipped him with that kind of hero-worship which any kindly clergyman can win by a little sympathy and self-sacrifice. Accordingly, when the news spread of his

promotion to S. George's, there was an outburst of feeling in the schools and parish very creditable to both pastor and people, which of course sought expression in the usual presentation. Notwithstanding that the times were not good, and Dr. Clancy looked askance and sour at the movement, a considerable sum was subscribed before George's next step,

his resignation not only of the curacy, but of S. George's and of the ministry itself, became generally known. Dr. Clancy at once thought, and was pleased to think, that this startling news would put an end to the project and put to shame its promoters. But it didn't. Such was the ignorance or apathy of the poor concerning real religion, that sympathy was rather deepened than deadened by the report, which got about in a day, that Mr. Kneeshaw was giving up everything—income, position, and prospects—for conscience sake. Subscribers increased their subscriptions, new subscribers in numbers gave in their names, and only very few were Christian enough to take the view of Dr. Clancy, Mr. Gant, and all the clergy of Wefton, that Mr. Kneeshaw was a criminal of the deepest dye. If he had been convicted of drunkenness or immorality the feeling against him in clerical and clerically influenced circles would hardly have been stronger.

We have too much respect for the clergy in general to confound them with their brethren of Wefton. We have too much respect for them even to quote here the conversations of their Wefton brethren upon this terrible Kneeshaw scandal. Nay, we shall even refrain through the same motive from giving the views on the subject of an old woman, a great friend of Mabel's, who understood from Mr. Gant that Mr. Kneeshaw had stabbed his mother in church because she was a Catholic. This old lady had a poor opinion of Catholics, that is, of the Irish; "they were druffen folk, an' ommost allus fratchin', still a man's mother wor his mother, choose how;" and, the old woman being herself a mother, abused George to Mabel with a clerical zest and zeal. But the abuse was so like that of Dr. Clancy and of Mr. Gant, that in respect for them and their cloth we decline to print it.

We must, however, as it has a bearing on our story, say something of the practical effects of Dr. Clancy's feelings towards George as they showed themselves in his opposition to the proposed presentation.

No one was more scandalised by the movement than Mr. Gant, in part because the presentation was to be to a heretic, but chiefly because it was not to be to himself, who also was about to leave the parish church. Hearing, then, Mr. Sherlock stigmatise George's desertion of the Church as "a kind of matricide," and Dr. Clancy describe all subscribers to the presentation as "accessories after the fact to his offence," Mr. Gant bustled about repeating and exaggerating after his manner these two statements to all he met or visited. Some, like Mabel's old friend, somewhat misunderstood him; others understood him, but disagreed with him; and only a few could be brought to see the thing from anything near his standpoint. Accordingly the movement was not in the least checked by Mr. Gant's crusade, and he had to report to Dr. Clancy that this disgraceful scandal to the Church was being promoted by almost all the Sunday School teachers, and that a meeting to fix the day and form of the presentation was to be held the next evening in the Parish Church schools.

"This thing should be stopped, Dr. Clancy."

"It shall be stopped," cried the Doctor, who was a dictatorial little man. "You will attend the meeting, Mr. Gant, and let it know *my* views on this subject."

"Yes?" replied Mr. Gant, interrogatively, expecting the Doctor to arm him with a more formidable weapon than his views on the subject. Hadn't they heard Mr. Gant's views unmoved?

"Tell them plainly what *I* think about it, Mr. Gant," repeated the Doctor, at a loss to interpret Mr. Gant's expectation of further instructions.

"But suppose they still persist in going on with it?"

The Doctor thought Mr. Gant had waxed fat and kicked since his appointment to S. George's, and that the audacious suggestion was ill-disguised insolence. "Be good enough, Mr. Gant, to follow my instructions, and we shall hear no more of the matter," he said sharply, in a manner at once offended and offensive, and dismissed Mr. Gant by the simple process of turning his back upon him.

Mr. Gant attended the meeting, and expressed the Doctor's views, as it were, through a speaking-trumpet; exaggerating Dr. Clancy's abhorrence of George's offence, and his disgust with those who showed plainly that they condoned or approved of it by their promoting the presentation. Mr. Gant's language was so strong, wild, and metaphorical, that many of the teachers and others present were at last convinced that Mr. Kneeshaw must have committed some crime unmentioned, because it was unmentionable, which forced him to resign S. George's and quit the ministry.

Now many of the teachers were factory girls; and there is no known mode of advertisement comparable to getting together thirty or forty factory girls, one from each mill in the town, and telling them a piece of scandal. At 6.30 the next morning it will be in every mouth in every mill, and at 6.30 next evening it will be sown in six thousand households, each itself a hotbed for its propagation in its neighbourhood.

Now of course in each factory there is a church faction and a chapel faction, who battledore the shuttlecocks of ecclesiastical scandals back and forwards with polemical moderation and mildness. To the chapel faction this unknown and unnameable wickedness of a church parson was a welcome weapon. It was all the more handy and horrible for being unknown. The dullest imagination can picture more horrors "than vast hell can hold," and is sure at any rate to fill a blank with its own favourite sin. But, we need not say, that as the chapel hands grew more and more horrible in their hints, and certain in their conclusions, the church hands, who had themselves set the thing afloat, repented them of their lack of charity, and began to doubt a scandal which was flung back in their own faces. As often as not in Church, State, and Society, a devil is cast out by the help of a devil. Many of these girl teachers, then, finding themselves hoist with their own petard, became on a sudden

cautious and charitable, and agreed to see the superintendents of the Sunday Schools, and set them upon ascertaining from Mr. Gant what the crime was of which he gave such horrible hints. The superintendents, nothing loth, presented themselves that evening at Mr. Gant's lodgings as a deputation from the schools, to ask Mr. Gant to put in writing his charges against Mr. Kneeshaw. Mr. Gant was amazed and confounded. He had made no charges against Mr. Kneeshaw. "What! not the other night at the meeting?" "No. He had said at the meeting merely that Mr. Kneeshaw was an Atheist, or an Infidel, or at all events didn't believe what the Church believed." "Mr. Gant would not mind, then, attending another meeting and making this explanation to it?" "Mr. Gant wouldn't mind."

Now the best service you can do a man is to spread about him some infamous calumny which can soon and certainly be disproved; for of course, in the reaction an unpopular man becomes popular, and a popular man heroic. This was the service Mr. Gant did Mr. Kneeshaw. When he was forced to explain at the second meeting that Mr. Kneeshaw's crime consisted in not believing what the Church believed, that is, what Mr. Gant believed, that is (in the judgment of the superintendents, both grim Protestants) what the Pope believed, the enthusiasm for Mr. Kneeshaw and against Mr. Gant rose to fever heat. Mr. Gant was absolutely hissed, and rushed off in a rage to report to his rector.

Meanwhile the meeting, having buzzed a bit like an angry hive, settled down to arrange about the time, place, and character of the presentation. The first question was whether it should be a purse of sovereigns *and* a timepiece or piano, or a purse of sovereigns alone. There was some captious objection to the piano, on the grounds that Mr. Kneeshaw didn't play, wasn't married, and couldn't take it about with him easily to or in Australia. The timepiece was popular, and would have carried the day, but for the unfortunate fact that there were *two* watchmakers among the subscribers, and it was not possible to order the clock from either or neither without offence. Besides a piano and a timepiece, the only presentation that had been made, and was therefore conceivable by unimaginative and precedent-ridden Yorkshire folk, was a work-box; but the strong good sense of the meeting held this an inappropriate present to a bachelor. There remained, therefore, only the other alternative of a purse of sovereigns in its naked simplicity, which finally was carried unanimously. As for the day, as Monday and Tuesday were "washing days," Wednesday service night, Thursday baking, and Friday "fettling day," Saturday was carried without discussion. As for the place, of course it should be presented in the school, and equally of course, after a tea-party. There remained only the arrangements for the tea. Just at this point of the proceedings Mr. Gant returned, held a hasty conference with the superintendents, and marched off again with an air of no little triumph. The senior superintendent then announced to the breathless meeting that he and his colleague were sent

for by Dr. Clancy, but would return soon and communicate the conference and its result. This announcement created a great sensation in the House, which remained in a very excited state till the return of its leaders from the foot of the throne. We must explain what took place there. Mr. Gant, as we have said, rushed off to the Vicar to complain of the indignity done to him, Mr. Gant. If he could have emptied himself of himself for a single moment, he would of course have represented the indignity as done in his person to the Doctor, whose ambassador he was, and thus secure the violent revenge he was hot for. But Mr. Gant could no more get himself out of his mind for a moment than he could leap away from his own shadow. However, as the Doctor happened to be a self-important little man, this did not much matter. The insult of which Mr. Gant gave, as usual, an exaggerated account, would not have seemed to Dr. Clancy terrible if it had not glanced off Mr. Gant and touched himself. This was terrible.

"Do I understand you to say, Mr. Gant, that when you told them of my disapproval of this scandalous subscription they hissed you?" asked the appalled vicar.

"They hissed my whole speech!" cried Mr. Gant, as if this was the superlative of the positive insult the Doctor incredulously questioned.

"Did they know, Mr. Gant, that you were expressing *my* views on the subject?" asked the Doctor, pale but composed.

"Certainly; I said I came there at your request to tell them what you thought about it."

There was a solemn silence, broken at last by the Doctor's saying in an awful voice, "Send the men to me."

"The superintendents?"

"Yes."

"Now?"

"If you find them still in school, Mr. Gant. Thank you. Good night."

Hence the summons to the superintendents. Mr. Lightowlers, the senior superintendent, was a difficult man to deal with. He was a grocer, but of an ungrocer-like mien and manner. An immense man, slow of intellect, speech, and movement, with a face like a full moon, gashed by an enormous mouth. When he smiled there seemed no room for another smile in the school. But he seldom smiled, or indeed opened his mouth except to eat or drink. He swallowed an idea as slowly as a snake crushes, lubricates, and sucks down a rabbit, and took a snake's time to digest it. But there was one thing harder than to get an idea into his head—to get one out of it; for his mind was like a missionary box; you may get one thing at a time with some difficulty into it, but hardly any amount of shaking would get a thing out. Possibly his vast height made him seem so slow. Sounds took so long to reach him. After you had talked to him for five minutes on various subjects, he answered only your first sentence. He might have answered the last sentence next day, perhaps, if you had come upon him at the precise moment of its reaching

him. "His soul was like a star and dwelt apart." It was so high up that it gave little light, and that little took long to travel. He had already overtaken the idea that Mr. Kneeshaw was leaving the parish church, and that a presentation was to be made to him; and he had got abreast of the idea of his giving up S. George's and the ministry, his reason therefor and Mr. Gant's rage thereat; but Dr. Clancy's feeling in the matter was not yet quite clear to him. It was clear to his colleague, Mr. Garside, who, though no genius, was brighter than Mr. Lightowlers, to whose judgment, however, Mr. Garside deferred sincerely as to a man whose father had left him 4,000*l*. These two dignitaries, we may say in passing, were not the superintendents of the main and mother parish church schools, but of an outlying daughter in Mr. Kneeshaw's charge.

"Summat up?" said Mr. Garside interrogatively, as the two left the school together. Wefton folk are the most terse and laconic speakers in the world.

"Summat up?"

After some seconds' deliberation Mr. Lightowlers replied, "Ay."

"Happen it's t' presentation?" again interrogatively.

Mr. Lightowlers, after half a minute's consideration, replied "Ay."

"He's agin it," resumed Mr. Garside, referring to Dr. Clancy; but Mr. Lightowlers, understanding him to refer to Mr. Gant, was again able, after a few seconds' pause, to reply, "Ay."

As Mr. Garside was himself slow and weighty of speech, this conversation lasted them till they reached the vicarage and prepared Mr. Lightowlers for the subject of the Doctor's lecture. It was as well that he was so prepared, not merely because his mind was slow to turn as a tortoise, but because the Doctor was not pompous in speech, but short and sharp rather.

Mr. Lightowlers no sooner filled the doorway of the study with his enormous person than the Doctor flew straight at his throat so to speak.

"Good evening, gentlemen. Am I to understand that you persist in making a presentation to my late curate, Mr. Kneeshaw, in the teeth of my express disapproval?"

Here the Doctor paused for a reply, which Mr. Lightowlers was able to make with unusual promptitude. He was prepared for the question about the presentation, and answered, after a moment or two, without thought, "Ay."

It was not the answer itself, but the manner of the answer, that was maddening. Mr. Lightowlers would have some difficulty in digesting the Doctor's fine language, even if he had taken time in the process; but as he had the idea of the presentation already in his mind, and the answer on the tip of his tongue, he shot it out after only a second's pause, and long before he could have mastered the spirit of the question. Therefore he grunted "Ay" with a placid indifference a thousand times more exasperating than expressed insolence.

"Then, gentlemen," retorted the Doctor, white with passion, "the sooner you follow the example of your friend Mr. Kneeshaw and quit the service of the church the better. Such a presentation is an insult to the church, an insult to religion, and an insult to myself"—a really fine climax—"and I shall not permit it to be made by *my* teachers, or in *my* schools. Good evening, gentlemen."

During this outburst, Mr. Lightowlers stood fronting the Doctor with the precise expression in his face of a ruminating cow looking through a gate at you with a mild, dull, puzzled curiosity, and he would probably have stood thus for half a minute more (for he found rest after a heavy meal as promotive of mental as of physical digestion), if Mr. Garside had not pulled him by the coat-tails and piloted him out. The two walked half way down the road together without the interchange of a word. Mr. Garside was in deep trouble, too deep for words, as the Sunday School was a crown and kingdom to him.

Mr. Lightowlers was plunged in profound thought. After three minutes of such wrapped meditation he stopped suddenly to face Mr. Garside and electrify him with his discovery—"He's agin it, too!" pointing with his thumb over his shoulder to the vicarage behind him.

"Ay, he's agin it," replied Mr. Garside, not in the least amazed by the information. He's gi'en us the sack reet—taichers an' all. He has for sure."

Mr. Garside then relapsed into despondent silence, while Mr. Lightowlers incubated, also in silence, on this new idea suggested by his colleague, which, as being expressed in the vernacular, was soon developed in his brain. It was in full possession there, even before he found himself again on the platform, face to face with the anxious and breathless meeting.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he began slowly, and with extreme impressiveness, "he's gi'en us the sack."

After the delivery of this Spartan despatch there was dead silence—not the silence of expectation, for it was rather a long speech for Mr. Lightowlers, and no one dreamed of his saying more—but the sultry silence before a thunderstorm. Then it burst in a tumult of angry exclamations and questions. Mr. Garside, as being the Mercury of their two leaders, was beset by a host of eager and enraged teachers demanding the particulars of the interview. He gave always and to all the same stereotyped answer: "He said we mun gie up schooil or presentation—one or t'other." We need hardly say that the excited meeting decided unanimously to give up the school. The West Riding people never tire of telling you that they may be led but not driven, and certainly Dr. Clancy's attempt to stop the movement was about as effective as an attempt to turn back a pig by tugging at its tail.

When this phase of the movement became thoroughly known through the medium of the mills, the Independents generously came forward with an offer of their school for the tea-party and presentation. They thought

it a good opportunity to display Christian charity and to stir up deadly strife among the church party. While the teachers hesitated between this offer and a proposition made by the leader of a fife and drum band attached to the school to head a procession of the subscribers through Wefeton to Mr. Kneeshaw's lodgings, where the presentation might be made in the open air, the whole movement collapsed suddenly at a pin-prick.

George heard of the business for the first time from his tailor, an Independent, who, though he knew it was to be kept a profound secret could not resist the temptation of parading the magnanimity of his sect. George was at once surprised, pleased, and disgusted. He thought he had made no way among a people who took a kindness as if they were doing it, and whose most cordial manner seemed just to stop short of heaving half a brick at you. He was therefore very much surprised and pleased by the feeling that underlay the movement, but the movement humiliated him, as praise undeserved humiliates one, and its consequences and accompaniments disgusted him. He rushed off at once to see the junior superintendent, as there was not time enough to get an idea into Mr. Lightowlers' head, and begged Mr. Garside to summon the subscribers as soon as possible to a meeting in the school. Mr. Garside was disappointed to find him informed of the movement, but at the same time was pleased with the hope of his advice at this crisis. He had not the least doubt that Mr. Kneeshaw meant at the meeting to give advice about the place, time, manner, and perhaps even form of the presentation to be made to him, nor would such advice have struck him as out of taste or odd. He promised to have a full meeting of the subscribers at the school on the following evening—and he had. The place was crowded to suffocation, and George met with an overwhelming reception. It seemed as though feelings which had been rigidly suppressed for nearly two years had reached bursting pressure and exploded in a moment. George was overpowered, and was glad of the five minutes' respite to recover himself which Mr. Lightowlers' introductory speech gave him. Mr. Lightowlers rose, waited till there was perfect silence and for half a minute after, and then addressed the meeting thus:—"Ladies and gentlemen,"—pause—"aw've nowt that's owt to say,"—long pause—"aw've been nine year superintendent of this ere schooil, and aw've allus done my best, allus, aw hev." Here Mr. Lightowlers resumed his seat slowly and deliberately, and looked round upon the meeting with an air of self-complacency. Mr. Garside, however, after two minutes' whispering, got it into his colleague's head that Mr. Kneeshaw, and not himself, should have been the subject of his address, whereupon Mr. Lightowlers again rose without haste and without hesitation, and recommenced: "Ladies and gentlemen, Muster Kneeshaw is baan to spak' an odd word to t' subscribers. Aw'm a subscriber mysen; an' aw'm nowt agin' gien' five shillin' more to-wards t' presentation."

At this the applause was deafening, and Mr. Lightowlers resumed his seat with the pleased and proud expression in his face of a patriot

who had done and suffered great things for a not ungrateful country. Indeed the meeting was so moved by the grace and generosity of this reference to the presentation, that a verse of the song "The Fine Old English Gentleman," struck up by Mr. Binns, of the parish church choir, was sung by the whole audience enthusiastically in compliment to Mr. Lightowlers. It might have been thought that the enthusiasm had now reached its climax. Far from it. When George rose to speak, the audience dwarfed all preceding demonstrations by standing, cheering, clapping hands, and stamping feet for the space of two minutes. Of course much of the feeling displayed was an answer to Dr. Clancy's insulting ultimatum, but, taking all discount off, an immense amount remained to the credit of George. He had prepared a really good speech, but did not deliver a single word of it, not merely because it was an inadequate answer to this confounding demonstration, but because it all vanished like a dream when he stood face to face with the surging, cheering crowd. He stammered out some words of surprise and thankfulness, more eloquent infinitely than any prepared speech. He spoke then sincerely of the little he had done, and of the half-hearted way in which he had done it, and came thus to the point of his speech, which was that this little would be undone if he left nothing but strife behind him; that the subscribers would add even to the extreme kindness they had already shown him by accepting a suggestion he ventured to make as to the form of the presentation—great applause here—and that this suggestion was that the subscriptions should go to purchase books for a Sunday School library. This suggestion was accepted after much demur and remonstrance; Dr. Clancy was conciliated, peace restored, George immensely relieved, and Mr. Garside re-established on his throne.

CHAPTER XXIV.

WOMEN OF THE FUTURE.

WE rather hurried and huddled together the close of the last chapter. We ought to have said something of the disappointment of the subscribers at George's renunciation of all personal advantage from their generosity, and of the proportionate wrath of the village Hampdens amongst them against Dr. Clancy and Mr. Gant, to whose spiteful interference they put it down. George, to do him only bare justice, did all he could to convince them that in no case could he have accepted the purse or its value with a clear conscience, but they wouldn't be convinced. Mr. Gant, never popular, was now odious, as the jealous instigator of the Doctor in the business. On the other hand, George's magnanimity increased his popularity tenfold, and as this main channel for its expression was blocked, it overflowed into a hundred rills and rivulets of private presents of all kinds, from a valuable timepiece down

to such a spacious pincushion as would have gladdened the soul of Mrs. Gamp. Nor did he escape a presentation after all. There was in the day-school a young lady named Rachael Ann Hodgson, of the mature age of ten years, a very pretty and precocious child, who took it into her head to set on foot a subscription among the school children for a present to Mr. Kneeshaw. George took great interest in the day-schools, and had a class, of which Miss Hodgson was a pet member, and the news of his leaving them was taken very much to heart by them all. Miss Hodgson eat nothing on the day she heard it, and did not sleep the following night, and would probably have made herself ill by fretting if the bright idea of the presentation had not occurred to her. She mentioned it to the mistress, who privately approved very strongly of it, and even expressed her strong approval to the child; but, with the fear of Dr. Clancy before her eyes, she did not dare do more than encourage Rachael Ann to take the whole business in hand herself. Hereupon Rachael Ann had recourse for advice to her father, a busy member of a local Liberal committee. Mr. Hodgson, as a father, as a Liberal, as a committee man, was immensely pleased with Rachael Ann's idea. He advised her at once to form a committee, to elect a secretary and treasurer, and to assign a district to each member of the committee, to canvass for subscriptions. He also minutely instructed her as to the mode of procedure at their meetings, of which she, of course, was to be chairwoman.

Rachael Ann, a busy, important, clever, and original young woman, took the thing very seriously and sedately. Having appointed the whole class as a committee, she called a meeting of it for the assignment of a district to each of its members, and for the election of a treasurer and secretary, to be held in her house that evening. She chose her home instead of the class-room for the place of meeting, as she wished to have her father at hand to consult as legal adviser. He was not, however, to be admitted into the board-room, as his presence might overshadow the majesty of the chair.

Of course, an hour before the time appointed for the meeting, every child on the committee was present in her place. And, if the truth must be told, the chairwoman herself was in her place more than two hours before the appointed time. She had cut out slips of paper, two for each member of the committee, to write the name of the secretary and treasurer she wished to vote for, and she had written the name of each in collecting books provided by her father, notwithstanding that she was told again and again by her legal adviser that this was the future secretary's work. However, she couldn't resist the temptation, as anyone who remembers his childhood may imagine.

"Polly and Sarah Jane, give up," cried the chairwoman, with a peremptory nod. Polly and Sarah Jane were making cat's-cradles. "We're first to elect a secretary. You've all to write the name of the person you vote for on one of the slips of paper, then fold it up and put it into the mug." The mug was Rachael Ann's very own, a gorgeous

vessel, with "A Present from Blackpool for a Good Child," inscribed in large gold letters upon it. As there was but one pen, and each child wrote with her head on her left arm, her tongue out, and her eye following the slow trail of the pen as intently as a sportsman his game, the election took some time. As the other girls were not allowed to look over the voter's shoulder, they *had* to be allowed to play "hunt the slipper," which they did, all except the voter and the chairwoman, whose dignity, after a desperate struggle with her baser passions, conquered and kept her in the chair. When the voting papers were all at last written, folded, and dropped into the mug, it was found that this elaborate imitation of the ballot was not as effective as might be wished. For, in the first place, every child knew every other child's handwriting; and, in the second place, every child, except the chairwoman, artfully voted for herself. As, however, the chairwoman had voted for Elizabeth Tennant, this young woman headed the poll by a majority of one. Whereupon she rushed at the chairwoman, and scandalised her by flinging her arms round her neck, kissing her effusively, and then dancing round the room.

"Lizzie!" cried the chairwoman, in a shocked voice.

"What?"

"Sit down."

"But what am I to do?" asked the secretary, sobered suddenly by the sense of responsibility.

Hereupon the chairwoman flushed red as fire. What *was* there to do? Hadn't she herself done already all the secretary's work? After fidgeting uneasily in the chair for a moment, she slipped off it without a word, marched to the door, whose handle she succeeded in turning with both hands, and disappeared to consult her legal adviser.

"I told you how it would be, Rachael Ann," said Mr. Hodgson, shaking his head sadly and solemnly.

"I couldn't help it, father," pleaded Rachael Ann penitently.

"Did you write the date?"

"No, I didn't," eagerly.

"She can write the date," said the oracle, really proud of the suggestion.

Rachael Ann was back in the board-room in a moment. "Lizzie, you're to write the day of the month in each of the books."

"Is that all?"

"And the day of the week," added the chairwoman, with some presence of mind.

Miss Tennant would have rushed at once at her work if the chairwoman hadn't stopped her.

"We want the pen to elect a treasurer. You're all to write the name of the person you vote for—same as before," she said authoritatively.

"What's the good?" snapped Miss Breaks; "Lizzie voted for herself,"

"So did you," retorted Lizzie.

As this was a ticklish topic it was pursued no further, but the feeling of the meeting was obviously and unanimously against the ballot.

"It's all nowt," cried Miss Angles; while Miss Mathers declared she "wouldn't play at it," and Miss Terry horrified the chairwoman still more by the suggestion that they should play French blind man's buff—the chairwoman being blindfold, and whoever she touched first should be treasurer. Though this was the democratic principle of election carried out to a perfection almost ideal, the chairwoman was not advanced enough to approve of it, and things came to a deadlock. Recourse had to be had again to the legal adviser, who was more prompt this time with an opinion. As his own committee were always got out of a rut of sullenness by an order of "glasses round," Mr. Hodgson at once suggested that the cake, meant to be distributed amongst the committee at the conclusion of their labours, should be administered forthwith. The chairwoman, not herself altogether disinterested, jumped at the suggestion actually and metaphorically, but resumed her official manner on her reappearance in the board-room, bearing the plate of cake with the solemnity of an acolyte. The appearance of the cake had the effect of the approach of a general election upon the members, converting waverers and convincing obstructives. Even the snappish Selina Breaks became a courtier, and suggested that the chairwoman should choose the treasurer; while Louisa Terry outdid and outbid her by proposing that the chairwoman herself should be treasurer, which was carried by acclamation. The chairwoman again retired to consult her legal adviser, who decided that as both Lord Beaconsfield and Mr. Gladstone had held other offices in conjunction with the premiership, Rachael Ann might accept the post of treasurer, which was accepted accordingly.

There remained only the assignment of districts to the canvassers, a delicate and difficult business; for, as it was decided to go by standards, no one liked collecting among the first standard, the most in number and least in age. Miss Angles expressed the precise sentiment of the meeting in complaining that "they would be nobbut twenty-four to a shilling," a terse and Yorkshire way of calculating the subscriptions at a halfpenny apiece. *Noblesse oblige*; the chairwoman generously volunteered to take half the first standard herself, and her example so influenced the committee that the other half and the other standards were undertaken at once. Then the committee paid an unofficial visit to the chairwoman's doll, which was upstairs in a gorgeous cradle (won in a bazaar raffle), and each of the members was allowed to make it squeak by squeezing its stomach, and sleep by laying it on its back. Parliament was then prorogued till the following Monday evening, when the subscriptions were to be brought in to the treasurer; and the members—each made happy by the present of a bit of toffee—dispersed for the recess.

We have given the proceedings of the committee at length because, owing to Mr. Gant's excess of zeal, they had results out of proportion to

their importance. On the following Monday the committee reassembled two hours almost before the assigned time. Its members were in a state of intense and intolerable impatience. Each bore an immense blue envelope sealed with an immense red seal, addressed duly, but with this additional inscription underlined: "*To be opened only by the Chairwoman in committee.*" It had been left that afternoon at each of their houses by a lady in a grand carriage. The chairwoman at once took the chair, and with trembling hands, and in a silence that might be felt, broke the seal of her own envelope first. It was a crushing disappointment; there was only a blank piece of paper in it. She must cry, but could not cry in committee; so she rushed to the door, and in another minute was sobbing on her father's knee. Her father took the envelope, looked at the enclosure, put the child down, and cheered! It was a ten-pound Bank of England note.

"It's ten pounds, do! ten golden sovereigns—two hundred shillings!" exclaimed the delighted Mr. Hodgson, waving the note round his head.

Rachael Ann stood for a moment looking up at the note with a face of flame, too much stunned by the reaction and by the discovery of this fabulous treasure to do more than gaze and gape. In another moment she leaped up at it, and cried breathlessly, "Give it to me, father!" and rushed back with it into the board-room.

"It's ten pounds!" she exclaimed, rushing to show it to the secretary in the wildest excitement, utterly forgetful of her official dignity. "Two hundred shillings, Lizzie!"

Lizzie's first impulse, and the first impulse of every other member of the committee, was, of course, to open her own envelope. But this was to be done only by the chairwoman, who tore open Lizzie's first, calling her father, at the same time, to come and interpret. Mr. Hodgson pronounced Lizzie's a five-pound note. A five-pound note was found also in every other envelope, and, as there were nine members of the committee besides the chairwoman, the sum total of the enclosures amounted to 55*l.*! The school subscriptions came to 4*l.* 13*s.* 3½*d.*, making in all 59*l.* 13*s.* 3½*d.* The members of the committee danced, and screamed, and hugged each other, without any rebuke from their chairwoman, who herself, indeed, was jumping up and down, holding by each breast of her father's coat. When this ecstasy had somewhat subsided, the first question was, "Who was the fairy godmother?" No one knew.

"She was an old lady with a red wig," said Mr. Hodgson.

"It's nothing of the sort," cried the sharp, clear, decided voice of Miss Tubbs, who entered at this moment. "It isn't a wig, and it isn't red."

It was not. Her hair was of the reddish-brown hue which is a favourite colour for old ladies' wigs; hence Mr. Hodgson's mistake. Miss Tubbs was in such high good humour with herself for her own kindness that she forgave it.

"What! opened them already! I wanted to have the pleasure of seeing you open them. I didn't think the committee met till half-past

five, Mr. Chairman. This is the chairman, isn't it?" patting Rachael Ann on the cheek.

"I beg your pardon, ma'am," stammered Mr. Hodgson at last. "I didn't see you near to-day, ma'am, I'm sure. Yes, ma'am, that's my daughter, Rachael Ann. Rachael Ann, thank the lady."

"No; she mustn't thank me. I'm only one of the subscribers. I heard the children were getting up a present to Mr. Kneeshaw among themselves, and I went to offer a subscription to the mistress, when she told me of the committee, and the chairman, and the secretary. Which is the secretary? This? I thought so! And I was so pleased with the business that I went round amongst the rich Parish Church people, and a few of my own friends, and collected the money. I can assure you it was all given with the greatest goodwill, both for Mr. Kneeshaw's sake and for the sake of the chairman and her committee. Well, Mr. Chairman, were you pleased? And what are you going to buy, eh?"

Rachael Ann stood speechless, looking up at Miss Tubbs with exceeding reverence; the other children also, frozen where they stood, and in the positions in which they were surprised, gazed with wide-eyed awe at the fairy godmother.

"Rachael Ann, do you hear?" exclaimed Mr. Hodgson, in an accent of reproach. "You should have been here a minute ago, ma'am, and seen them! They were fit to tear the house down for joy."

"I heard them. They made such a racket, that I got in without your hearing me. But what are you going to buy, Mr. Chairman?"

"Please, ma'am," said Rachael Ann timidly, with a very becoming curtsy, "will you tell us, please?"

"What do you think of a watch?"

A watch! The whole committee looked blank with the same thought. Sixty pounds for a tiny watch! The Town Hall clock would have seemed a little thing for 60*l*. Miss Tubbs perceived the look and its meaning; she knew how children and Americans judged everything by size.

"Or you might give him the money. You might change it all into shillings and give it to him in a big bag." At this suggestion the countenance of the committee brightened again. "Or suppose you bought him a watch and chain, and a dressing-case, and a writing-desk, and a gold pencil-case, and a photographic album with the photographs of the committee in it. It would nearly take a cab to carry them all."

"Eh! that would be grand!" Miss Tennant involuntarily exclaimed, and it was evident she expressed the feeling of the committee. That their own photographs should form part of the presentation was an irresistible *argumentum ad feminam*. Thus Miss Tubbs, as usual, got her way, and smuggled the watch in under a heap of other things. In everything, great or little, with which she meddled, she must have her own way.

"Well, children, will that do?"

There was a universal shout, "Yes, ma'am."

"And when would you like to buy them?"

"Oh, ma'am, please!" pleaded Rachael Ann, with clasped hands and an expression of life and death earnestness, "*Could* we get them to-night?"

"*To-night!* my dear child. It's past five o'clock." But seeing the look of disappointment on every little face, and understanding that, in such a case especially, "A day to childhood seems a year," and not forgetting either that it would be to her own convenience to get the thing done with in one journey—for, of course, she must herself choose the articles under the pretence of allowing a free choice to the children—she said, "If you wish it very much, we must try and manage it, Mr. Chairman. Let me see: how many are there of you? Ten. Mr. Hodgson, will you kindly call a cab, and take five of the children with you in it to Banks', the jeweller's, and I shall take the other five there in the carriage. Go, get your bonnet on, Mr. Chairman. I shall take you, and the secretary, and these three," picking out the shabbiest-looking of the girls—not, to tell the truth, because it was the kindest, but because it was the oddest thing to do. She rejoiced in the thought of being seen driving about Wefton with a carriage full of shabby-looking little girls. As for the chosen children, they were in the seventh heaven of delight at the prospect of riding in a grand carriage, with a grand lady, to a grand jeweller's shop, to buy there 60*l.* worth of things! They thought 60*l.* should buy the whole shop, grand as it was. And, indeed, this was Miss Tubbs' difficulty: to persuade the children that they had got full value for their money in a few articles that one of them could carry out of the shop. But she did at last so persuade them, and truly too; for she haggled with the jeweller, and beat down his prices, in a way that would have extorted the admiration of a Jew. The only regret left in the minds of the children as they quitted the shop was that the articles had to remain at the jeweller's to have suitable inscriptions engraved upon them, and to be displayed for three days in his window; but even this last lingering regret was dispelled by Miss Tubbs asking the committee to tea, on the evening of the fourth day, to meet Mr. Kneeshaw and make the presentation.

And on the fourth day, at evening, they did accordingly meet Mr. Kneeshaw at Miss Tubbs' house. Rachael Ann, after tea, advanced to make a very pompous and hollow speech, composed for her by her father; but fortunately forgot it all in her nervousness.

"Please, Mr. Kneeshaw"—long pause, during which the bright brown eyes, looking up wistfully at George, filled slowly with tears—"please, Mr. Kneeshaw, these are for you," and the little woman broke down and cried with nervousness and mortification.

George, in the most natural and fatherly way in the world, took her on his knee and kissed her (to the horror of old Mrs. Ashton, a Parish Churchite, but to the delight and admiration of Miss Tubbs), and told her how pleased and touched he was, and how he would always remember her, and sometimes write to her, and send messages to his class; and so soothed her that she soon forgot her breakdown, and was bright and

happy again. Indeed, George was only too glad to hide his own emotion in soothing hers. He therefore spoke no speech; but took occasion during the evening to say a word or two of simple, earnest acknowledgment to each of the subscribers present, children and adults, which came from his heart and went to theirs more directly than any set speech could have done.

George, as we have said, owed the large share in the business taken by Miss Tubbs to the kind offices of Mr. Gant. That gentleman, being in the habit of unbosoming himself pretty freely to Miss Tubbs, had again and again detailed George's iniquities to her, and the iniquities of his partisans. He boasted, too, of having brought to nought the Sunday School presentation, and complained bitterly of Dr. Clancy's declining to interfere with that set on foot by the little children of the Day School. Now Miss Tubbs' Christianity did not go very deep, and she was, therefore, not in the least scandalised by Mr. Kneeshaw's giving up everything for conscience sake. On the contrary, Mr. Gant's zeal against him, which she took for jealousy, disgusted her. This, however, alone, would not have stirred her to active opposition. But Mr. Gant had the audacity to resent a stinging sarcasm of hers by the retort that all who sided with Mr. Kneeshaw must be infidels at heart. Hence Miss Tubbs' call on the school-mistress to offer a subscription. On hearing from her, however, of the committee, chairwoman, &c., she was so pleased (being a Women's Rights zealot herself) that she went round among her own friends and the richer Parish Church people, roused them by a recital of what she called Mr. Kneeshaw's wrongs and merits, amused them by the story of the committee, and extracted, without the least difficulty, the sum of which she disposed to such advantage.

CHAPTER XXV.

MABEL'S ANODYNE.

FOUR days after the children's presentation George sailed from Liverpool. The Committee, in fact, had only just time to have their photographs taken and presented to him in the station, five minutes before the starting of the train. Beside the children and Archer Lawley, who was to accompany him to Liverpool, a crowd of his well-wishers had come to bid him good-bye. An immense depth and warmth of heart lie hid beneath the chilling surface of these West Riding folk, which only a rare and great occasion discloses; and George was surprised to see in the crowd many a man and woman who had seemed barely to tolerate his visits, and who had seemed to accept any kindness he had done them ungraciously, and almost offensively. In some cases the general feeling expressed itself in tangible and embarrassing shapes. One old lady, for instance, thrust into the carriage to him kindly, but of course ostentatiously, a vast pasty. "Tak' it," she said; "it's gooid. There's aboon

four aance of butter in it." While another, her near neighbour, not to be outdone, had wrapped up a sparerib of pork in a red pocket handkerchief, which she forced on George, probably as a provision in case of shipwreck. "It's hooam fed," she said; "there's little like it where th'art baan, thou knaws." Mr. Lightowlers too was there, in the midst of a group of millgirls, teachers—mostly in tears—who had sacrificed half a day's wage to this farewell. Mr. Lightowlers had now got abreast of the speech he should have made at the meeting. Short as it was, it had cost him much time and thought, and would, no doubt, have done him and the school he represented credit, if he had got it out, as he meant to do, at the station. But he didn't. He had nearly begun it, however, when the train started, and George swept past the platform (on which Mr. Lightowlers stood, hemming to clear his throat) amid cheers, tears, and waving of wet handkerchiefs.

"What a kindly people, Lawley!" exclaimed George, very much affected, turning from the window, when a curve at last hid the crowd on the platform from his sight.

"They're the kindest people in the world," replied Lawley, "and they know it."

It was a great demonstration of feeling in favour of a man who had not been two years amongst them, but the crowd was brought together not only by a sense of George's merits, but by a sense of his wrongs. Why should they have to take this public farewell of him at a railway station? Because Dr. Clancy, at Mr. Gant's instigation, had forbidden any meeting for the purpose in the schools. And besides this sense of George's kindness, and this sense of injustice done him, there was also the sense of a parting like that of death—for a voyage to Australia is almost as dim and dreadful in the imagination of the inland poor as he voyage to the other world. All these feelings brought such a crowd to the station that strangers were under the impression some prince or murderer must be in the train.

"It's nobbut a parson," answered a railway porter in reply to one such curious inquirer.

"But what's he done?"

"Nowt."

With this explanation the anxious inquirer had perforce to be content, for his informant was a Lancashire and Yorkshire railway porter, and extraordinarily courteous and communicative for one of that company's officials.

Quitting George himself, we shall follow his thoughts back to the Grange, to "the nursery," to Mabel, utterly miserable for the moment, seated at the table, with her head resting on it, buried between her clasped hands. She had kept up all through with wonderful courage and cheerfulness, until, just at the last moment, some remark made by George (in setting a watch he had given her) about the difference between English and Australian time, brought suddenly the distance which was to sepa-

rate them vividly before her. All her spirit in a moment slipped away from her like water, and left her sobbing and clinging to George like a little child, as he folded her in a last embrace. It was not like Mabel, but for the last few weeks she had been on the strain to keep cheerful, hopeful, and happy in George's company, and the reaction came upon her just a minute too soon. In another minute he was gone. She heard him hurry down the stairs, heard the hall-door open and shut, heard the cab drive off, in a kind of stupor, as in a dim dream; and still the same sounds followed each other in the same order, over and over and over again in her mind—his step on the stairs, the opening and shutting of the door, and the rattle of the cab on the pavement. She could no more get them out of her head than we can get a haunting tune out of our head; and behind them was a great trouble, which she knew was there, but shrank from facing. Out of this stupor she at last roused herself. Her spirit rallied and reasserted itself, and forced her into doing what certainly no other girl in Wefton would think of doing in the same circumstances—sick-visiting.

There are a great many receipts for the cure of melancholy. There is that in *The Spleen*:—"Fling but a stone, the giant dies!" There is old Burton's:—"Be not solitary; be not idle." There is Johnson's improvement upon it:—"If you are idle, be not solitary; if you are solitary, be not idle." But the best receipt in the world we believe to be this—Find some one more wretched than yourself, and get out of yourself in trying to relieve him. It includes Green's, Burton's, Johnson's receipt of occupation and company; but it prescribes an occupation that will take you out of yourself most, and a company that puts to shame your discontent. Anyhow, Mabel had found it of old the most effective remedy for depression, and now, by a great effort, she forced herself to a recourse to it. She chose the worst case on her list, that of the sick child of a poor woman, who was expiating by starvation the crime of being kicked almost to death by her drunken husband. He had been sent to prison for a month for the assault—just in the nick of time for him; for, as he had pawned all he could lay hands on for drink, till there was not another drop to be had, and nothing left, therefore, to live for, he was perfectly content to be taken care of by the Queen. Meantime his wife was left to console herself with such sweet memories of him as remained to her—five tender pledges of his love, the youngest five weeks old, and the tickets of eight other pledges in the generous charge of an uncle. It is said that the children of the very poor die in heaps, and that the mortality amongst them is out of all proportion greater than that amongst those of the more comfortable classes, and this, no doubt, is something to be thankful for. Of them, at least, it is true:—

Μὴ φῶναι τὸν ἅπαντα νικᾷ λόγον

Τὸ δ', ἐπεὶ φανῇ

Βῆναι κείθεν ὅθεν περ ἦκει

Πολὺν δεύτερον ὡς τάχιστα.

We give this pessimist sentiment as we find it in the Greek chorus, in order not to shock the sensibilities of the sex, who are optimists to a man. But though, as we say, vast numbers of the children of the poor die, it is amazing how much it takes, in many cases, to kill them. Certainly it cost Death as much trouble to kill a brace of Mrs. Houldsworth's children as it would have taken him to empty a palace. He had fair game to begin with in children born of a drunken father and an ill-used and half-starved mother, while from their birth they were themselves half-starved and ill-used, and so clothed that it would have been almost better to have let them go naked. At least, then, the rain would have run off, and not lodged in their broken boots and tattered shirts. Then Death served out to them in quick succession almost every childish disease in his dispensary, and followed up this volley with the bayonet, in the shape of Dr. Dredge's lancet and leeches, in vain. He then ran over the eldest boy with a hansom, who, however, emerged almost as unhurt as a hen from under the vehicle, while the youngest but one drank from the spout of a boiling kettle without being much worse than his father from his fiery potations. But at last the health of the eldest boy gave way, after three years' siege, during which it was almost continually mined within by starvation and assaulted without by disease and cold. He broke down suddenly and died in three days, to the inexpressible grief of his mother, who complained piteously to Mabel, that in five weeks more he would have been a half-timer, and brought her in three shillings a week. He was buried in a parish coffin and in a pauper's grave, a week after his father was committed to jail; and the funeral *cortège* consisted of his mother (with a borrowed veil hiding her two still black eyes), a warm-hearted old Irish washerwoman, his two brothers, and his little sister Minnie. The day was wet and bitter, the cemetery exposed, and that corner of it in which paupers were flung together was ankle-deep in water, and Minnie's boots seemed made of rather stout blotting-paper. Her brother John George, in a black box, being lowered roughly into a filthy hole, and scolded to the last by a man in a white nightshirt, was Minnie's idea of the ceremony. She was at no loss either to account for this frightful punishment which had overtaken her brother. For the day before he died he *would* get out of bed (the child was wandering), in spite of his mother's threat "to put him in the black man's cellar if he stirred." This then was the black man's cellar into which he was now being put. It was a horrible punishment, and had its due effect on Minnie when her turn came, which it did the next day. For the cold, which seemed to turn to ice the very marrow in her bones, settled deep on her lungs, and she took her brother's place in bed. Be sure she was docility itself with "the black man's cellar" always before her eyes, and was afraid to disturb her mother at night by asking for a drink, though she was parched with thirst.

This was the patient little patient Mabel set forth to see. Certainly

we have taken an unconscionable time in introducing her, but Minnie was once a pet of ours, and pets are always bores to strangers. She'll not trouble the reader much longer, however, or any one else either. Mabel, having put up, with her usual stores for the replenishment of Mrs. Houldsworth's empty larder, a most gorgeous doll, set forth to find, in helping this hopeless household, the anodyne she sought. Mrs. Houldsworth's was a horrid little hole of a house—a single room, of such narrow dimensions that, if it was not for the consideration of Mr. Houldsworth in taking out of it every stick of portable furniture, Mabel would hardly have found room to move without tumbling a chair over, or over a child. Almost the only furniture in the place, in fact, was a bed, and a settle made up as a bed at the far side of the fire. Minnie was lying still as death on the settle, and took no more notice of Mabel than she had taken all the morning of her mother, or of her two brothers, who were having a rather noisy game of funeral, digging a hole in a little heap of coals (kept inside the door for safety and for a seat), and trying to force a half-starved cat to lie in it till they covered her well up. Their draggled and dogged-looking mother, who had a baby of about six weeks old at her breast, would now and then object in really tremendous language, not to the game itself, but to the noise they made in playing at it. They didn't mind her in the least, but at Mabel's entry they lost their presence of mind, and thereby the cat, which escaped out of doors, while their mother, at sight of the basket, rose and looked as amiable as she could, which wasn't much.

"How's Minnie, Mrs. Houldsworth?"

"Shoo's a deal waur, Miss. I can mak' nowt on her to-day. She taks no notice of nobody."

Mabel stepped across to the settle and smoothed aside the hair from the fixed eyes which had a far-off and fearful expression in them. She was looking into "the black man's cellar" with a presentiment that she would be thrust there soon herself by her mother.

"Don't you know me, Minnie?"

No; Minnie didn't know her. Mabel then produced the dazzling doll. She had promised it yesterday morning, and the child looked and longed for it with the double impatience of childhood and illness all that day and all the night through, and still this morning she kept worrying her mother about it with fretful persistence, till that good lady, pouncing upon her savagely, brought at once before the child's eyes, by her shrill scolding, the horrible hole into which her brother had been shut up for his naughtiness. That picture of the funeral, changing from moment to moment, like a kaleidoscope, into different phases, all of them frightful, cowed and fascinated her, and fixed her eyes for hours with the expression which seemed to look through Mabel at some grisly spectre in the distance. But the doll, gorgeous as a sunset, caught and recalled her notice. She clutched it greedily, and hugged it and held it from her to look at, and hugged it to her again with extraordinary energy and

interest, her weakness being considered. Then she looked up from it to Mabel, at first with the puzzled expression of one who is trying to make out the meaning of a sentence in a strange tongue—for kindness was Greek to her—and then with a wan, faint, and flickering smile, as if she had mastered the meaning and found it very good.

"Do you like the doll, Minnie?"

Minnie's reply was more eloquent than words. She again held the doll from her for a moment to admire, and expressed her admiration by hugging it again to her heart.

"You must give it something to eat, and show it how to eat, Minnie." For Minnie had refused all food, even beef tea, for three days, and Mabel was trying by this stratagem to coax her into having some jelly she had brought. It was no use. Minnie tried, but couldn't swallow, and held out the doll to Mabel to be fed in her place. Just then the two boys, whom the sight of the jelly attracted, pressed so unfortunately against Mabel that their mother cuffed one and scolded both so shrilly that Minnie's terror returned upon her. She clutched Mabel's hand, just as it was taking the doll from her, and clung to it while the old fixed and fearful and far-off expression came back into her eyes. Mabel saw in a moment that Minnie was in mortal terror of her mother, and saw also no less clearly that the child had not long to live. It was horrible to think she should die shrinking from the only hand there was to minister to her.

"Mrs. Houldsworth, I shall nurse Minnie for a few hours, if you will kindly call at the Grange, and say that I shall not be home for some time. I dare say you have marketing to do, and will be glad to get free. You need not hurry back, as I shall stay at least three hours." Mabel reinforced her marketing suggestion by putting a few shillings into Mrs. Houldsworth's hand, and got rid of both boys at the same time by giving them threepence each to spend with their mother in the market.

Having Minnie to herself—we need hardly say that "Minnie" was Mabel's name for the child, not that current in the Houldsworth household, where she was known as "Wilhelmina"—having Minnie to herself, Mabel recalled her attention by pretending to force the doll from her grasp, and then, being an adept in dealing with children, got out of Minnie piecemeal, by coaxing and skilful questions, the cause of her terror. She found it no use to tell the child that her brother had never been in the black box at all, since her mother, according to the invariable custom of the poor, had held her up and shown her his ghastly face as he lay in his coffin the moment before it was closed. So Mabel had to try another tack, and tell her that God had taken her brother out of the black box and out of the filthy hole, and brought him to a beautiful palace, in the midst of a lovely garden. This didn't mend matters much. Minnie had heard the name of God daily from her father, and often from her mother, but always coupled as inseparably with the name of hell, and with the ideas hell suggests, as it is in some Christian creeds.

Mabel therefore had to avoid this discredited name altogether, and to speak of a very kind person taking care of her brother.

"Kind as oo?" asked Minnie, looking anxiously up at Mabel.

"Oh, ever, ever, ever so much kinder."

This was too much for Minnie's imagination. She lay still for a moment, looking at the doll and trying to grasp this overpowering idea, till she had to give up the attempt in despair.

"Will oo tak' me aat of black box?"

From which question it was plain both that Minnie had made her mind up that she was to be put into the black box, and also that she preferred to trust to mercies she knew to take her out. Hereupon Mabel, like a modern theologian, had again to modify her system to suit the new situation. To make herself at once intelligible and credible to Minnie, she seemed to represent her brother as sent by post to heaven; as put into his coffin as into an envelope, which, having been posted in the grave, was broken open on its arrival in heaven, where he was released. She had now to return to a less materialistic view.

"They won't put *you* into the black box, Minnie; angels will take you up in their arms to heaven."

The imagination even of a child in the West Riding is torpid. Minnie made a feeble attempt to follow Mabel's pictures of angels and of heaven, but fell back tired, and contented with the assurance that she was not to be put into the black box. Her faith in this assurance was absolute, and it took a dead weight of horror off her heart; at the same time it was bound up with Mabel's presence. Thus comforted, Minnie, for the first time since she was taken ill, fell into a sound sleep, with Mabel's forefinger clutched in her little hand. An hour later her mother's shrill voice roused her, and conjured up a frightful nightmare, which seemed to take four days in unfolding its funereal horrors, though it really lasted only the few twilight seconds between a sound sleep and thorough wakefulness. She started up with a truly heart-aching scream: "I'll be gooid—I'll be goo—id!" This last word being prolonged into such a cry of agony as haunted Mabel for many a day. Minnie, in her dream, had got to that climax of horror in her own funeral, when the coffin having been screwed down upon her, and borne to the cemetery, and lowered into the foul and slimy grave, the mourners turn to leave it for ever, as the impatient sexton flings upon it the first shovelful of mud. The perspiration stood in beads on Minnie's forehead, her eyes were starting from her head, and her cheeks were drawn with such an expression of horror as made her look old and withered. "Minnie!" cried Mabel, almost in a scream, startled out of herself, and seeking to rouse the child instantaneously. At the sound of Mabel's voice, as by an exorcism, the horrible possession gave place, and a smile of the most perfect relief and love and trust dawned in the child's face as she recognised Mabel bending anxiously over her. Let us hope life is such a dream, with such an awakening.

This paroxysm seemed to exhaust Minnie's remaining strength. She lay back, quite still, with closed eyes, and breathing that grew more and more quick and laboured till, as the rattle began in her throat, and the old terror was returning into her face (for she vividly remembered the rattle in her brother's throat, and what followed), she opened her eyes, and, stretching her arms to Mabel, cried in a terrified voice, "*Do tak' me in oor arms!*" Mabel took up the dying child with exceeding tenderness, and was again rewarded with a smile of such peace and trust as she has never forgotten. Minnie, with her head nestled against Mabel's bosom, kept her eyes fixed on her face with the look a dying Catholic fastens on his crucifix. She tried twice to say something, but Mabel could not catch the whisper. It was, no doubt, something loving, for Minnie, after the second attempt to speak, made an effort to raise her arm to Mabel's neck; but it fell back, and she could only pout her lips as for a kiss, when the last long breath came and went, and life with it.

"She's—she's gone!" cried Mabel, awed and moved profoundly.

"Ay, shoo's goan," said the mother, looking critically into the still face which had fallen back over Mabel's arm. "Shoo's aat of it all; shoo is."

Without another word she took the body from Mabel, and laid it gently down on the settle, while a single tear found its way down a deep furrow in her cheek and dropped on the child's dead face. She had been a loving little child herself once, but misery had scorched up her heart into a desert. Going to the door, she screamed out to James Henry, who was pegging a top bought out of Mabel's threepence, and bid him "tell Mary Flaherty that our Wilhelmina is deead, and ax her if shoo'll coome and help to lig her aat." Meantime Mabel stood by the settle thinking, not without tears, what a sad little life it was, and wondering reverently what was its meaning:—

Riddle of destiny, who can show
What thy short visit meant, or know
What thy errand here below?

She was not left long to such musing, for the neighbours, hearing of a death—a death is one of the few treats in their dull lives—crowded in, and disgusted Mabel with their cool criticisms on the corpse. "Mrs. Houldsworth," she said aside to that good lady, giving her some more money out of her slender purse, "don't let the coffin be black. I shall bring some flowers to-morrow." Next day she brought the flowers, and on the fourth day she was in the cemetery chapel before the funeral arrived, and was the last to leave the little grave.

By this sad diversion Mabel softened the first sorrow of separation. It is a good receipt, if Misery attack you, to carry the war into her own camp and head-quarters, and we beg any despondent reader to try it:—

*Si quid novisti rectius istis,
Candidus imperti; si non, his utere mecum.*

Mr. Gibbon's Love-Passage.

To the large class called general readers the most entertaining part of biography is that which relates to affairs of the heart. One need not go deep into human nature to seek the causes of this predilection, and if one should do so it would be only to repeat truisms and paraphrase proverbs. Indeed, the books devoted to the love-stories of celebrated people would form a curious and not a small collection. It is said that in Germany there are continual publications relating to Göthe's youthful fancy for Frederica Brion, which have come to be called 'Die Frederike-Literatur;' and in France it seems that the last word has not yet been said about George Sand and Alfred de Musset, notwithstanding several volumes on the subject which came out twenty years ago. There is a branch of literature devoted to people who have been famous for their love-affairs only, of which the letters of Mdle. de Lespinasse and of Mdle. Aissé are specimens, and which increases yearly. There is no apology or explanation necessary, therefore, for offering an account of the single love-affair of one of the greatest English authors, especially as the object of his affection was a woman who has many titles to lasting remembrance herself. In all notices of Gibbon hitherto this passage has been treated as an incident rather than an episode. In the most recent work on him (by Mr. James Cotter Morison in the "English Men of Letters") less than half-a-dozen pages are given to the subject—two to the affair itself, and four to exonerating Gibbon from the accusation of coldness and inconstancy. Perhaps with the data which Mr. Morison had at command when he wrote, he was impartial in acquitting Gibbon from these charges; but even if the latter was excusable for not marrying against his father's will, as without it he could not marry comfortably, there is no excuse offered for his wooing and addressing a young lady without the certainty of his father's consent under those circumstances. Since the appearance of Mr. Morison's notice all the particulars of the story have been made public for the first time. It has an interest which could not have been guessed from the scanty accounts previously given: the persons connected with it are famous in their own right, and the newly-revealed qualities of the heroine give it a place in sentimental literature which Gibbon's poor figure as a lover could never have commanded. It is impossible to associate romance with the countenance which prompted Porson's scurrile jest, and poor, blind, old Mme. du Deffand's angry suspicion when she tried to find its outlines. Yet in the owner's early days it had attractions for an enthusiastic girl,

whose beauty, intelligence, and goodness marked her for the heroine of a love-story. She became, moreover, the friend of the most distinguished men and women of her time, the wife of a chief actor in the stormy prologue to the terrible drama of the Terror, and the mother of Mme. de Staël. The first love of such a woman would be worth knowing, even if the object had been an obscure country pastor or lawyer of her native valleys; and as it was evidently the groundwork of Mme. de Staël's novel of *Corinne*, it is curious to compare the fiction with the reality.

In the chateau of Coppet, on the lake of Geneva, famous as the home of M. and Mme. Necker and their daughter Mme. de Staël, there is an old tower which has served the family for generations as a muniment-room. In it are stored journals, memoranda, documents of every sort, and a collection of letters, amounting to twenty-seven volumes, addressed to M. and Mme. Necker, and signed by almost every famous contemporary name in France, and by many of other nations, with copies of important letters written in reply. For some unexplained reason, possibly the prolonged life of Mme. de Staël's daughter-in-law, the late owner of Coppet and its archives, who died but three years ago, this treasure of memoir and biography has remained untouched until the past twelvemonth. The mine has been opened at last by M. Othenin d'Haussonville, who has published what he terms a series of studies on the Salon de Mme. Necker, his great-great-grandmother. The first chapter contains a very interesting and touching account of the girlhood of this lady, from which, and the testimony of a few other witnesses, the love-passage of Mr. Gibbon can be truly set forth.

Suzanne Churchod was born in July 1737 in the manse of the little Swiss village of Crassy or Crassier, too insignificant to be even named in Murray's guide-book. Her father, Louis Antoine Churchod, was minister of the Protestant church which stood opposite his unpretending abode, a white-walled, green-shuttered, small, square building, with a strip of garden and small fruit-trees dividing it from the road, like scores which everybody has seen who has been in Switzerland. Her mother's family name was Albert de Nasse; she belonged to the petty nobility of Dauphiny, whence she had fled with her father from the religious persecutions under Louis XV. Suzanne took rather too much pride in her drop of good blood, and at one time in her girlish career she signed herself "Churchod de Nasse," and had her letters addressed to "Mlle. Albert de Nasse." She was an only child and an idol; her good parents spared no pains in teaching and training her; but it is evident that they also spoiled her, and gave her a consequence in her own eyes which they themselves never assumed. Besides her aristocratic pretensions, she inherited from her mother force of character and personal beauty. The latter is so uncommon in Switzerland that Mlle. Churchod's must have been the more striking, and her reputation for personal loveliness was widespread. She has left a portrait of herself at sixteen, according to

the custom of the day, which is by no means so complimentary as descriptions given of her by other people. "A face which betrays youth and gaiety; fair hair, and complexion lighted up by soft, laughing, blue eyes; a well-shaped little nose, a mouth which curves upward, and a smile which answers to the eyes; a tall, well-proportioned figure, which lacks the advantage of elegance; a rustic deportment, and a certain abruptness of movement which contrasts strongly with a sweet voice and modest expression. Such is the sketch of a portrait which you may think flattered." That it was not flattered any one may see by the engraving from a later picture of her in the first volume of Dr. Stevens' *Life and Times of Mme. de Staël*; the nose is aquiline but delicate, and the brows are finely arched in a beautiful, expansive forehead; the expression of the face is of mingled sprightliness and sentiment. The painter has bestowed a grace and ease which the original never possessed, but all contemporary accounts of her speak of her beauty in stronger terms than her own, and the Parisians were dazzled by her brilliant fairness and freshness. She had need to be very handsome, or her erudition would have frightened off her admirers. Her father devoted himself to her instruction, and gave her what was considered a solid education, which included some knowledge of the classics, mathematics, and physical science. She amused herself by writing in Latin to a friend of her father's, who replied in the same language, complimenting her on her Ciceronian style—"et tantam eruditionem in tam molli planta." To these severe acquirements she added the feminine accomplishments of French, music, painting, and embroidery.

At an age when girls are usually in the school-room Suzanne took an active part in the hospitalities of her father's house, and was surrounded by admirers. The first of these were young ministers from Geneva and Lausanne. A favourite stratagem of the clerical adorers was to relieve M. Churchod of his sabbath services, which necessitated their spending the day and night at Crassy. On Monday morning the volunteer substitute jogged away on the pastor's old grey nag Grison; Grison had to be sent back with a note of thanks which often required a response, and the correspondence devolved upon Suzanne. Among the records of this period is a written promise signed by two young divines, who pledge themselves "to the very charming young lady Mademoiselle Suzanne Churchod to preach at Crassier as often as she shall exact, without being begged, entreated, pressed, or conjured, because it was the sweetest of all pleasures to oblige her on every occasion."

Gossips were not wanting at Crassy, Geneva, and Lausanne; the assiduity of the young preachers was commented upon, and Suzanne was censured for encouraging it. One friend (not in holy orders it may be supposed) took it upon himself to write her a remonstrance, telling her that when church was over she should "drive them out with a broom, or keep out of the way herself." Interference with a girl who was living at home with her father and mother savours strongly of provincialism and Presby-

terianism, but it must be confessed that M. and M^{de}. Churchod did not take the best care of their daughter. Some of her secular admirers sent her verses which might have scandalised a Paris fine lady. This country parson's daughter at sixteen received very well-turned madrigals, which alternately praised her charms and deplored her rigour. It is unlikely that she showed her parents these effusions, although she made no secret of her correspondence or about any of her proceedings. However rigorous, Suzanne in her teens was no prude, probably because of her very innocence. Many years later, M^{de}. Necker, the paragon of married women and mothers, whose primness was a source of both amusement and annoyance to her visitors, alluded to those delightful days with some shame at her girlish freedom and flightiness; she confessed that she had had no notion of propriety—"my simplicity prevented my understanding it, and my head was turned by flattery."

The young men only did their share in spoiling Suzanne. Before she was fairly grown up she was reported a sort of local prodigy, and set up like a little goddess in the centre of the horizon beyond which her imagination did not reach. Suzanne Churchod's first appearance in Lausanne caused a sensation which the inhabitants and strangers living there at the time well remembered many long years afterwards. Lausanne for a hundred and fifty years at least has made its boast of a learned and literary society which can hold its own against that of any city in Europe. Its claims have been recognised, in so far that it has been for a century and a half the chosen resort of distinguished men of various nations. It is enough to mention Voltaire, who there appeared in his own tragedies before an audience whom he pronounced to be "as good judges as there were in Europe;" Gibbon, who, after paying it several long visits, settled there to finish his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*; Mickiewicz, the Polish poet, who at one time had a chair in the Academy; Sainte-Beuve, who there delivered the course of lectures on Port Royal which constitute six volumes of his published works. Notwithstanding all this literature they keep a little behind the times. M. d'Haussonville says wittily that in 1757 they had lost the hour of day, and the town-clock still marked the time of the Hôtel Rambouillet. Even during Sainte-Beuve's sojourn there (1837-8) there was a lingering taste for literary travesties and nicknames; the young people carried on their flirtations and love-affairs under cover of his lectures, and the damsels gave their swains the names of defunct young Jansenists of the seventeenth century.

In Suzanne Churchod's heyday free-thinking was coming into fashion throughout the polite world. Religion was an active force among the worthy Swiss. Their morals were pure, their manners were simple, their pleasures were innocent, their tastes were rather pedantic. The Academy, or as we should say College or University, of Lausanne, gave an intellectual bias to the whole society, in which, notwithstanding the preponderance of grave and learned professors and divinity students, young

people enjoyed an importance and independence unknown elsewhere. On summer evenings the citizens had the friendly habit of resorting to the open square near the castle, and the fine old Gothic cathedral in the heart of the académic quarter of the town, where the sons and daughters of the old feudal families (in spite of aristocratic distinctions kept up to this hour in that ancient republic) mingled with those of the middle class to talk and dance and sing under the chestnut-trees. There were dancing assemblies, pic-nics, and clubs or societies on the model of the Italian literary associations. Suzanne Churchod was brought by her parents into this privileged circle, where she was said to excel all the young girls in beauty and all the young men in knowledge. Here the black-coated ranks of her clerical admirers were broken by the students of the Academy and beaux of the gay set, and she was acknowledged at once as queen of their balls. A society was founded in her honour, called the Academy of the Springs, from a spring in a neighbouring valley where the members often held their sessions; it was organised on the basis of the courts of love of the days of chivalry, but the members took their names from Mdlle. Scudéry's romances of *Clélie* and *Le grand Cyrus*. Suzanne was made president (we may be sure she was not called chair-woman) under the name of Thémire. Every young man, or knight of the Academy of the Springs, as he was termed, was required to wear the colours of the young lady who pleased him best, the lady to reciprocate the compliment—that is, if she reciprocated the preference we may hope. When a member wished to change his or her colours, the reasons had to be assigned in full session, and the Academy decided upon their validity. Every candidate was required to give a truthful portrait of him or herself, person, mind, and character, and to contribute in turn an original production, either in prose or verse, the reading and discussion whereof was the chief business of the meeting. There were also regular debates on stated topics—as, for instance, “Does mystery in itself enhance the pleasure of love, and can friendship of the same sort exist between a man and a woman as between two men and two women?” Arcadian days, which dwelt long in the memory of those who had any part in them! Far into this century the spot was still shown in the little valley near the spring where the youthful academicians gathered in fine weather, and the throne of turf from which their lovely president ruled the proceedings.

Suzanne's triumphs, like those of other conquerors, would have been incomplete without the warning voice which bade her remember that she was but human. An older friend, again of the other sex, undertook the part of monitor, and informed her that she showed her desire to please men too plainly, and even although they all believe that to be woman's chief concern, they do not like it to be made too evident; warning her that she would repel instead of captivating them by her manner, &c. &c. Any attractive young lady can finish the sermon from memory. Suzanne honestly admitted that she liked the praise of men better than

any other sort, and in spite of her unblushing conduct the offended sex did not cease to shower upon her French and Latin verses, declarations of love, and offers of marriage. Although the young coquette confesses that her head was turned by adulation, her heart was apparently untouched until she was nearly twenty. About the time that she was proclaimed queen of wit and beauty, there arrived at Lausanne a young Englishman, who attracted more attention than was generally bestowed upon strangers of his age. After giving promise of achievement by his precocious though desultory taste for letters, he had been dismissed from Oxford for joining the Roman Catholic Church. His father, a Tory M.P. in easy circumstances, sent him to be cured of his errors under the care of a Swiss Protestant minister, M. Pavillard—a change in his mode of life which came very hard at first. This was Edward Gibbon, not yet the fat-faced personage who confronts the title-page of the *Decline and Fall*, but a slim, studious youth, who appeared in the estimable society of Lausanne with the twofold distinction of his errors and his reform. He was gradually admitted to their select diversions, and soon made fast friends among them. His foreign birth, his natural place in a wider sphere, his intense application to learning after a brief outburst of dissipation in company with some idle young fellows of his own nation, his speedy reconversion under the influence of his wise and venerable tutor and the Protestant atmosphere of the town, combined to make him a little lion in the intelligent circle to which he was introduced. He heard on all sides of the charms and talents of Mdlle. Churchod, and had a great curiosity to see her before they met. When the fated day came he wrote in his diary: "I have seen Mdlle. Churchod—*Omnia vincit Amor, et nos cedamus Amori.*"

This was in June 1757, when they were both twenty; he was her senior only by a few months. Suzanne has left a picture of him as he first appeared to her blue eyes, which is engaging enough: "He has handsome hair, a pretty hand, and the bearing of a person of condition. His face is so singular, so full of cleverness, that I know none which resembles it. He has so much expression that one constantly finds something new in it. His gestures are so appropriate that they add much to his words. In short, he has one of those extraordinary physiognomies which one never tires of studying, depicting, and following." Gibbon in his memoirs gives a still more flattering description of the young girl. His account of the events which ensued is brief and dry, but he implies that at first, although his suit was not discouraged, he was much the more enamoured of the two. The affectation of seeming worse than one is had not come into vogue. Gibbon had to the full the decent desire of putting his best foot forward which belonged to his respectable class and times. He took no pride in making himself out a Lovelace to this village beauty, but left it to be inferred that he, and not she, was the honourable victim of the affair. But there are many ways in which a man may ruin a young girl, and that Gibbon did not destroy Suzanne

Churchod's happiness for life is due to the vigour of her intellect and character. After making her acquaintance he improved his opportunities to the utmost, obtained permission to visit her at her home, which he did several times during the course of that summer and autumn, once staying as long as a week. An interchange of letters soon began. His at first betray more vanity and wish to dazzle his fair correspondent than sentiment. Like other lovers, real and feigned, he counts the sand since the glass was turned on his banishment, and tells her that it is "a hundred and twenty-one hours eighteen minutes and thirty-three seconds since Crassy disappeared in the clouds." In the next, it is a week since he has seen her, "and to say that it seems like a century would be true but hackneyed." He professes himself unwilling to use the language of ordinary lovers, and thus to forfeit the epithets of "original and unique" which she has bestowed upon him; yet how shall he convey a notion of the tedium of existence since they parted? He then relates how he once passed three weeks in a stupid country-house with a cross old crone who talked to him about Gog and Magog, Antichrist and her private interpretation of the Apocalypse, with no books and no neighbours, except an old invalid who described all his ailments, and two country gentlemen who had ruined themselves by lawsuits, and believed that their only hope for better days lay in the division of Germany; but one being a Prussian and the other an Austrian, they could not agree about the conditions. "Well!" he cries, "those three weeks did not seem half so long as the time I have been absent from you." After all, this is not an excess of ardour. He pays her elaborate compliments at the expense of every other woman in the world, and tells her of a picture he has seen in a studio and taken for a portrait of her, but the painter assured him that it was a fancy piece, his ideal of female loveliness, which he had sought for in vain all over the world; Gibbon relates this adventure only to exalt the graces of Mdle. Churchod's mind and character above those of her person. This artificial and laboured tone continues throughout the correspondence on his side; it was the tone of the time, but neither in love-letters nor in the ludicrous poetry which he addresses to her in defiance of the rules of French syntax and prosody, is there one touch of true tenderness or a single spark of real passion. Gibbon's French verses are curiosities of literature, as he wrote French prose with remarkable correctness and fluency. At length he began to write as an accepted suitor, yet he did not depart from the conventional form in which he professed himself to be "with the utmost esteem and affection, her very humble servant."

There are no letters of Suzanne's belonging to the early stages of the correspondence. Gibbon's rejoinders prove that she usually wrote in a bantering strain. From the beginning of her engagement she kept copies of her letters—a strange precaution; but although she had perfect confidence in his attachment, misgivings as to the result of the connection beset her from the first. The warmth and depth of her feelings pervade

her letters to him, yet she wrote with a dignity and self-restraint which showed how fast she matured under the influence of love. But already the fear of objections on his father's part, and her determination not to resist them, were openly expressed. Clouds soon arose from this source. Suzanne made it a condition of her acceptance that her lover must make his home in Switzerland as long as her parents should live. To this Gibbon at first joyfully subscribed, but before long he began to complain of it. On a little journey to Fribourg he wrote her a letter in which he was ungenerous and uncandid enough to hint that, as she saw so many obstacles on both sides, perhaps an avowal of indifference from him would be a welcome release to her. With many reproaches for this supposed coldness and protestations of his own devotion, he admits his fears that the condition she has affixed to their marriage cannot fail to wound his father both in his parental affection and in his ambition; still he, Edward, does not despair of reconciling him to it; he goes on to retail with insufferable egotism and cumbrous complication of suppositions, the arguments with which he will soften his father's resistance, his own absence of ambition, indifference to worldly honours, philosophical superiority to wealth; he will remind his father that knowledge has been his only passion until love awoke in his heart. It was a letter to dispel a girl's illusions. Suzanne replied with much controlled emotion: she reiterated that she could not allow her lover to disobey or even to distress his father—the love she bears her own parents is her measure for what he owes to his; but she will not justify herself against his insinuation of her wishing for an avowal of indifference on his part. "I never supposed for a moment you could imagine such a thing; it was too far from my heart to enter my thoughts."

Her forebodings were verified. Gibbon's stay at Lausanne was drawing to a close when they first met, and in the spring of 1758, about six months after their engagement, he went home to England. He wrote twice to her on the journey, letters which seem to have gone astray; then followed a languishing correspondence, a present of his first work, *Essai sur l'Etude de la Littérature*, which was written in French; finally a letter announcing his father's relentless opposition to their marriage, and his own mournful acquiescence in it. From Gibbon's account in his memoirs one is led to suppose that the rupture of his engagement took place shortly after his return to England, and ended all communication between himself and Mdlle. Churchod: "I soon discovered that my father would not hear of this strange alliance, and that without his consent I was destitute and helpless. After a painful struggle I yielded to my fate: I sighed as a lover, I obeyed as a son; my wound was insensibly healed by time, absence, and the habits of a new life. My cure was accelerated by a faithful report of the tranquillity and cheerfulness of the lady herself; and my love subsided in friendship and esteem." The deliberate misrepresentation of the course of events is proved by the date of the aforesaid letter, August 1762,

when they had been affianced for nearly five years. In it he repeats the final conversation between himself and his father, which the older man closed by saying: "Marry your foreigner—you are independent. But remember that you are a son and a citizen." Whereupon his son retired to his chamber, and remained there two hours. "I will not endeavour to describe my condition to you. I came forth to tell my father that I would sacrifice the happiness of my life to him." The epistle concludes with the obligatory protestations of his own misery, and prayers for the lady's happiness, and an entreaty that she will not altogether forget him.

In the meantime other griefs were gathering about Suzanne's joyous existence, and gradually shutting out its brightness altogether. Early in the year 1760 she lost her too fond and indulgent father; Crassy passed into the care of a new pastor; the widow and orphan of M. Churchod were left almost in penury. It was then that the strength and worth of Suzanne's character first asserted themselves. She turned her talents and education to account by teaching. There is a tradition in the Pays de Vaud of the beautiful Mdle. Churchod jogging about on a little donkey to the houses of pupils who lived out of town. For upwards of three years she followed the hard calling of a daily governess bravely, still rejecting offers of marriage, still clinging to the belief in a conditional engagement to Gibbon—a cruel situation, a sickening change. The young woman's courage did not forsake her, but the serene and even temper for which she had been praised, and for which she was remarked in after-times, gave way under the trials and suspense of her lot. Her intercourse with her mother became troubled; who knows with what complaints and regrets for better days the poor woman, whose life had been full of reverses, may have irritated and embittered her daughter's laborious and anxious existence?—with what taunts for her fidelity to a faithless lover when there were eager suitors who would restore them to comfort and consideration? That painful phase is known only by the daughter's bitter self-reproaches after she lost her mother, and even into middle age. It is likely that Suzanne exaggerated her shortcomings as she exaggerated everything, for all the letters of condolence which she received on Madame Churchod's death, early in the year 1763, laid stress on the consolation which the sense of her duteousness and devotion must afford her.

And now the poor girl was alone in the world—father, mother, home, and lover gone—earning her bitter bread by uncongenial drudgery; an object of charity where she had been a goddess; still admired and courted, yet with nothing before her except the dismal perspective of the life of a daily governess, or a marriage without love. Sentimental and romantic, with feelings which had been roused by a real passion, any alternative seemed better to her than the last. Gibbon's letter of August 1762 would doubtless, with the aid of time, have ended the struggle, but for his unexpected return to Switzerland about six months afterwards,

soon after Madame Churchod's death. So strange a step under the circumstances, coupled with the expressions of attachment and unhappiness with which he concluded his farewell, naturally rekindled Suzanne's hopes. She was at Geneva when he reached Lausanne, but there is no mention of their meeting either in the records of Coppet or in his account of this visit in his memoirs, although he descants on the welcome and pleasures he found at his old abode. There is no reason to think that he wrote to her or sought her out, but his return gave force to his petition for remembrance; and Suzanne, with the faith of a love which had strengthened while he was forgetting, ascribed it to fidelity. Unable to endure her agitation and uncertainty, she wrote to him in the following passionate and pathetic terms:—"Sir, I blush for the step I am about to take. I would fain hide it from you; I would hide it from myself. Great God! can an innocent heart abase itself to such depths? What humiliation! I have had more terrible sorrows, but none which I have felt so poignantly. But I owe the effort to my peace of mind; if I lose this opportunity, there is no more peace for me. . . . For five years I have sacrificed everything to a chimera; but at last, romantic though I am, I begin to perceive my mistake. I beg you on my knees to undeceive my infatuated heart: sign an avowal of your complete indifference to me, and my soul will accept its destiny—certainty will bring the calm which I crave." She adjured him to answer her sincerely, and not to trifle with her repose, as she had too long persuaded herself that what were perhaps symptoms of coolness on his part were proofs of delicacy and disinterestedness. She implored him with a sort of frenzy never to betray the appeal even to her most intimate friend. "My horror of such a punishment is the gauge of my fault, and, as it is, I feel that I am committing an outrage on my modesty, my past conduct, and my present feelings." These are the accents of Corinne and Delphine.

Gibbon was gentleman enough to return the letter; it remains among the archives of Coppet, with its address, its black seal, the token of her recent loss and loneliness, and her own superscription, in English: "A thinking soul is punishment enough, and every thought draws blood." His reply must have wounded her love and pride too cruelly; it was not kept. Even at this day, when the tears have been so long dried, the pulses so long stilled, when, as Sainte-Beuve says in another case, it cannot matter much whether her love was crossed or successful, one is forced to regret that Mdlle. Churchod should have made any rejoinder. She wrote again the same week, goaded by two emotions, which breathe through every sentence—outraged pride and the impossibility of breaking off with him at once and for ever. The proceeding was not dignified, but the tone of the letter is strictly so. "Sir, five years' absence was insufficient to effect the change which I have just undergone. It is to be regretted for my sake that you should not have written in this way sooner, that your previous letter was not in a different strain. The expression of suffering and sorrow, elevated and

enhanced by the semblance of virtue, is calculated to excite another person to great follies, and you ought to have spared me five or six irreparable ones which have decided my fate in this life." She thanks him for having opened her eyes and revived her self-esteem, enough, at least, for her to be conscious of its smart. "It was not to you that I sacrificed it, but to an imaginary being, who could exist only in a romantic crack-brain like mine. From the moment your letter undeceived me you re-entered the ranks of ordinary men, and from being the only one I could ever love, you have become the last whom I should fancy, because you are most unlike my sentimental (*céladonique*) ideal." But she did not stop there; she proposes that they shall bury the past together, offers him her friendship, proposes to give him a letter of introduction to Rousseau, and asks his advice about an occupation. She had been thinking of taking a position as lady's companion, and was hesitating between England and a German court; she begged for the benefit of his counsel and experience in the choice. Gibbon allowed this letter to lie unanswered for three weeks, which adds a stamp of brutality to his conduct. His reply was formal and cautious; he thanked Mdlle. Churchod for the offer of her friendship, but said that a renewal of their intercourse and correspondence would be too dangerous for himself—and possibly for her; on all necessary occasions she should find him a friend on whom she could rely; the position of companion in England, as elsewhere, was uncertain, depending on the character of those with whom one lived. "But you, Mademoiselle, have everything to hope from it. It would be impossible for any one to deny you their respect, and difficult not to award you their friendship." This stilted and cold-blooded composition is signed "De Guibon," as if to emphasise its unguineness.

Here decidedly Mdlle. Churchod should have stopped. That she did not do so is the sole excuse for Gibbon's hardness and frigidity. But she actually permitted her friends, the Pastor Moulton and Jean Jacques Rousseau—an odd coalition—to devise a little project for winning back her recreant lover by singing her praises to him, and repeating the admiration and attentions of which she was the object. This was too like pursuit, and foreshadows the terror with which her famous daughter inspired some of the men whom she honoured with her friendship. It is needless to say that the little conspiracy did not succeed; Rousseau declined to carry out his part in it, and wrote to M. Moulton: "M. Gibbon's cooling off towards Mdlle. Churchod makes me think ill of him. . . . Any man who does not feel her value is unworthy of her, but one who, having known and felt it, could forswear her, is a man to despise." M. Moulton himself wrote: "Dear friend, I conjure you not to torture yourself; you rend my heart. If this man is worthy of you, he will return to you; if he is a wretch, let him go; he does not deserve a single regret." This was soon proved, but it required a sharper wrench yet to uproot the attachment which had fastened round

the very corner-stone of her woman's nature. She fancied, poor girl, that it was on his imaginary perfections she had built her trust; it had long rested on the bare strength of her own affection. Towards the end of the same summer (1764) Mdlle. Churchod and Gibbon met at Ferney, where Voltaire had collected the cream of the Vaudois society, which was so much to his taste. On this occasion, when Suzanne was making a brave effort to seem in good spirits and wear her willow gaily, Gibbon treated her with an insulting rudeness which left her no choice but a breach. She wrote him one long, last letter, the outpouring of wounded vanity and pride—an endeavour at least to reinstate herself in the respect which she had apparently forfeited by her constancy. She recalled all the circumstances of their acquaintance—of his courtship, of their engagement, his often-repeated assertion that he would not give her up for his father's dissent, and her own reiterated determination not to go counter to it; the advantageous offers which she had refused in his absence, and which she valued only as proofs of her disinterestedness; it was to his knowledge of two of them, from men of good standing and fortune, that she had ascribed his renunciation of her when their union seemed indefinitely postponed. As she heard that he was not seeking any other woman in marriage, what wonder that she had set down his conduct to delicacy and unselfishness, and preference of what he deemed her good to his own happiness? Strong in this belief, when her father died she had valiantly rejected the home and ease and assured future which were laid at her feet, and adopted a mode of life which she detested, to support her mother and herself. She could not resist the temptation of alluding to the conquests which still marked her path; but it was with a burst of bitterness that she recalls how, in the hour of her bereavement, when rejected lovers, mere acquaintances, even strangers, had hastened to offer her comfort, the only one who had given no sign of sympathy was he to whom her heart belonged. Yet she thanks Heaven for having saved her from a marriage which would have resulted in mutual misery: "Hard heart, which I once thought so tender! What did I ask of you? What did I want? Your father was still alive, and my resolve was unshaken; I asked for the only sentiment which remained to us. . . . I consider you a man of honour, incapable of breaking a promise, seducing, or betraying; but capable of tearing a heart to shreds for your amusement by the most ingenious tortures. I no longer invoke the wrath of Heaven upon you, as I did in my first anger; but I need be no prophet to assure you that the day will come when you will regret the irreparable loss which you incurred when you estranged for ever the too frank and tender heart of S. C."

So ends the chapter of Suzanne Churchod's romance. With her wounds cauterised, but still burning, it now only remained for her to decide upon her future. Many homes were open to her upon her own terms. She was living temporarily with the excellent Pastor Moulton, a former lover, who had become a faithful and devoted friend. Dis-

appointed of his early love, he had married her friend, Mdlle. Cayla. Suzanne, in order not to be a burden to these kind hosts, filled the post of governess to their children while going on with her other lessons. How irksome, how intolerable, these duties, associations, and scenes had become to her one may well guess. She longed to escape; the only alternative was a marriage of reason or braving the unknown trials of a lady's companion. In her dread of the latter, she lent an ear to the proposals of a lawyer from Yverdun, who had been sighing about her for some time, but she would not commit herself finally without further respite.

During the latter half of the eighteenth century it was the fashion in France for fine ladies in delicate health to go to Geneva and consult Dr. Tronchin. There was a floating society among the lacustrine villas, drawn together by the strange medley of tastes and ideas which rose to the surface in the ferment preceding the Revolution. People resorted to the shores of Lake Lemman—some for Dr. Tronchin, or for change of climate; some for the scenery, for Voltaire, for Rousseau; some because they were sentimental, and cultivated sensibility; some because they were strong-minded, and practised inoculation; most of them for the reason which takes idle folk anywhere—because they found it amusing. The head of this society was the Duchesse d'Anville, a Rochefoucauld both by birth and marriage, who prided herself on her literary tastes and liberal ideas. She had made Madame Churchod's acquaintance about the time of her father's death, and had interested herself in various ways in the young lady's behalf. There was another fair patient of Dr. Tronchin's, a young widow from Paris, Madame de Vermenoux, rich, intelligent, attractive, and fond of amusement. She liked clever men, and had them about her; she also liked clever women, and falling in love with Suzanne, proposed to take her back to Paris as her companion. Suzanne was between twenty-six and seven, the same age as Madame de Vermenoux, and her pride and love of independence had increased with poverty; she hesitated when it came to the point of even temporarily surrendering her liberty. The influence of her friend M. Moulton steadied her wavering inclination: she accepted the proposal, and set out in this humble position to find a cure for her grief in new scenes, while Gibbon's steps were drawing towards Rome, and that memorable hour of meditation in the ruins of the Capitol which gave the world his immortal work.

The eighteenth century was at its apogee in France when Mdlle. Churchod first went to that country. The great lights of the age were still shining, if some were on the wane; there was an extraordinary concourse of men and women of genius, talent, and learning in Paris. Suzanne's natural taste for literature and the intercourse of clever, cultivated people had been sharpened by her acquaintance with Rousseau, Voltaire, and the people of note whom she met at Ferney. She entered upon her new life with eager expectations, too high-pitched to be

satisfied; she had probably indulged in visions of the Encyclopædists sitting in a circle, each talking like a book, and imagined Parisian society as only a larger and more brilliant debating club than her little Academy of the Springs. Her first letters to Switzerland express disappointment and betray provincial prejudices, although she met Marmontel, Bonstetten, and other celebrated men at Madame de Vermenoux's. Of the last-named Suzanne has nothing to say but praise for her kindness, consideration, generosity, and sympathy. The only drawback to her position as companion, besides a melancholy which she could not always hide, was the difficulty of dressing properly on an income of about sixteen pounds a year. She received no salary; Madame de Vermenoux loaded her with presents, and would have supplied all her wants if Mdlle. Churchod's pride had permitted them to be suspected. The charm began to work, and the enjoyment and excitement of the new life to be felt, and to promote her moral cure, which was rapid in proportion to the anguish of her undeception and disillusion. She began to live again. At the same time she felt that she was merely passing through those new scenes; that the situation was becoming daily more untenable from her want of means; that the way before her was narrowing to the issue of a return to her pupils or the marriage of reason at Yverdun.

The *deus ex machinâ* who descended to deliver her from this hard alternative was her countryman James Necker, of the Swiss banking-house of Necker and Thélusson, which had lately been established in Paris. He had been captivated by Madame de Vermenoux's airy graces before she went to Geneva; she had been unable either to take him or let him go, and on her return to Paris he was still a suitor on probation. It was in this light that Mdlle. Churchod first made his acquaintance in July 1764. She liked him, and seconded his suit with her friend. Madame de Vermenoux's first experience of matrimony had been unfortunate; she was rich enough to care little for M. Necker's fortune, nor did she wish to lose her aristocratic position by a plebeian marriage; yet Necker was not a man to discard unadvisedly. In short, she shilly-shallied, and while she did so the wind veered to another quarter. M. Moulton's suspicions pointed in the right direction first; early in October Mdlle. Churchod was forced to admit that he was right; she wrote to him that M. Necker preferred her, but that probably nothing would come of it, as he had started on a journey to Switzerland without offering himself. She confessed that she was far from indifferent to the result; and in a later letter she declared that if this brilliant castle in the air should dissolve, she would accept the lawyer of Yverdun, on condition of his allowing her to spend two months every year with her friends. But the crisis was at hand. On M. Necker's return from Geneva, he lost no time in addressing Mdlle. Churchod, who replied by a little note, "written," says her descendant, "in a trembling hand: 'If your happiness, sir, depends upon my feelings for you, I fear that you were happy before you desired it.'"

It was true. Suzanne loved again, and with the whole force of her nature; this time it was no longer a girl's ardent fancy for a youth who appeared to her as a lover on their first meeting, and whom she endowed with all the attributes which a pure and highly-wrought imagination could supply; she had studied Necker with a keen, impartial scrutiny, but when she gave him her heart it was his to the day of her death, and she loved him with a tender and passionate admiration such as seldom endures the friction of domestic life in any relation. It is impossible not to think that she over-rated him, but he was one of those unusual men whose qualities maintain their ascendancy over the persons with whom they are in the closest and most constant intercourse. On the eve of their marriage Suzanne wrote her future husband a letter in which she told him all her love for him; she wished that he should know once for all the intensity and extent of her affection, and with noble candour she confessed it all, and the boundless happiness with which it filled her soul. Many women might say as much at such a moment, but there was not a day in her married life when she would not have signed it, and the last expression of her affection, written as she felt her end draw near, is in the same deep and fervent strain.

The news of Mdlle. Churchod's good fortune soon reached Switzerland, and caused a general jubilation in the Pays de Vaud. Congratulations rained upon her, upon M. Necker, upon the Moultois. Even the poor lawyer of Yverdun, writhing under the blight of hopes which had been kept alive for several years, and the smart of knowing that he had been tolerated only as Jack-at-a-pinch, heartily joined his good wishes and prayers for her welfare to the chorus of happier voices, and absolved her, "*mademoiselle et ma plus chère amie*," for the pain she had inflicted. What Mme. de Vermenoux had to say we are not told. It is significant that the pair were married rather on the sly, and that Suzanne informed her benefactress of the event afterwards, with many excuses and explanations. However, if there were any displeasure or vexation, they were soon dispelled; Mme. de Vermenoux was the godmother of their first and only child, and their fast friend to the end of her short life.

The marriage took place towards the close of the year 1764. M. and Mme. Necker established themselves in a vast old-fashioned house in the interesting quarter of Paris called the Marais, even then no longer fashionable, but highly respectable, where the firm of Necker and Théluson had its banking-house. She entered at once upon a large and luxurious style of living, the scale of which she found somewhat bewildering and oppressive until her energy and system gave her the control of its details. It was here that Gibbon found her on his return from Italy a few months after her marriage. All readers of his memoirs will remember the letter, with its undertone of pique and fatuity, in which he relates his first visit to her; he asks comically if anything could be more mortifying than Necker's going off to bed and leaving him alone with his former flame, but he did not feel to the full the almost contemptuous security of

the proceeding. It did not strike him that Mme. Necker might be taking a gentle revenge for his declining her friendship on the plea of its dangers for her as well as himself.

When the little chagrins and embarrassments attendant on the renewal of their intimacy wore off, Gibbon found a great and lasting resource in the friendship of the magnanimous woman whose love he had slighted, and of her husband. His name occurs and his letters appear throughout the record of Mme. Necker's life; and when she and her family were forced to seek refuge at Coppet from the fury of popular fickleness, which pursued Necker alternately with huzzas and hooting until it drove him from France, they found Gibbon at Lausanne writing his *Decline and Fall*. No guest was more frequent or welcome at Coppet than he. Mr. Morison alludes to Mme. Necker's letters to Gibbon at this period as testifying "a warmth of sentiment on her part which, coming from a lady of less spotless propriety, would almost imply a revival of early affection for an early lover." Mr. Morison was not aware of the tendency to exaggeration which was a life-long characteristic of Mme. Necker's, contrasting singularly with her rigid circumspection of conduct; she was fully conscious of the defect herself, and tried to correct it in her daughter. One need only compare with these letters her expressions in writing to her husband to get the measure of her feeling for the two men. One need but compare the appearance and attitude of the two, and turn from little Gibbon, round and replete, dining with Lord Sheffield and other patrons, to Necker's imposing figure, even after he had grown unwieldy with corpulence, his fine dark head and face lighted by its penetrating smile, and the magnificent eyes which his daughter inherited from him—a sort of hero in overthrow.

Gibbon was probably conscious of his unfitness for romantic situations. His brief love for Suzanne is the single sentimental episode of which there is any trace in his life, except the absurd and apocryphal story of his getting on his knees to Mme. — and having to be helped up from them. The nobility of Mme. Necker's character invests the affection she cherished for Gibbon with a dignity and interest which is reflected upon him. The imagination dwells with pleasure on their return to the scenes of their early love, reunited by a worthy friendship which ended only with death.

The Daisy's Pedigree.

HAVE you ever paused for a moment to consider how much man loses for want of that microscopic eye upon whose absence Pope was apparently inclined rather to congratulate his fellow-beings than otherwise? What a wonderful world we should all live in if only we could see it as this little beetle here sees it, half buried, as he is, in a mighty forest of luxuriant tall green moss. Just fancy how grand and straight and majestic those slender sprays must look to him, with their waving, feathery branches spreading on every side, a thousand times more gracefully than the long boughs of the loveliest tropical palm trees on some wild Jamaican hill-side. How quaint the tall capsules must appear in his eyes—great yellow seed-vessels nearly as big as himself, with a conical, pink-edged hood, which pops off suddenly with a bang, and showers down monstrous nuts upon his head when he passes beneath. Gaze closely into the moss forest, as it grows here beside this smooth round stone where we are sitting, and imagine you can view it as the beetle views it. Put yourself in his place, and look up at it towering three hundred feet above your head, while you vainly strive to find your way amongst its matted underbrush and dense labyrinths of close-grown trunks. Then just look at the mighty monsters that people it. That little red spider, magnified to the size of a sheep, must be a gorgeous and strange-looking creature indeed, with his vivid crimson body and his mailed and jointed legs. Yonder neighbour beetle, regarded as an elephant, would seem a terrible wild beast in all seriousness, with his solid coat of bronze-burnished armour, his huge hook-ringed antennæ, and his fearful branched horn, ten times more terrible than that of a furious rhinoceros charging madly through the African jungle. Why, if you will only throw yourself honestly into the situation, and realise that awful life-and-death struggle now going on between an ant and a may-fly before our very eyes, you will see that Livingstone, and Serpa Pinto, and Gordon Cumming are simply nowhere beside you: that even Jules Verne's wildest story is comparatively tame and commonplace in the light of that marvellous miniature forest. Such a jumble of puzzle-monkeys, and bamboos, and palms, and banyan trees, and crags, and roots, and rivers, and precipices was never seen; inhabited by such a terrible and beautiful phantasmagoria of dragons, hippogriffs, unicorns, rocs, chimæras, serpents, and wyverns as no mediæval fancy ever invented, no Greek mythologist ever dreamt of, and no Arabian story-teller ever fabled. And yet, after all, to our clumsy big eyes, it is but a little patch of familiar English grass

and mosses, crawled over by half-a-dozen sleepy slugs and long-legged spiders, and slimy earthworms.

Still, if you so throw yourself into the scene, you cannot avoid carrying your own individuality with you into the beetle's body. You fancy him admiring that fairy landscape as you would admire it were you in his place, provided always you felt yourself quite secure from the murderous jaws and hooked feet of some gigantic insect tiger lurking in the bristly thicket behind your back. But, as a matter of fact, I greatly doubt whether the beetle has much feeling for beauty of scenery. For a good many years past I have devoted a fair share of my time to studying, from such meagre hints as we possess, the psychology of insects: and on the whole I am inclined to think that, though their æsthetic tastes are comparatively high and well-developed, they are, as a rule, decidedly restricted in range. Beetles and butterflies only seem to admire two classes of visible objects—their own mates, and the flowers in which they find their food. They never show much sign of deliberate love for scenery generally or beautiful things in the abstract outside the limits of their own practical life. If this seems a narrow æsthetic platform for an intelligent butterfly, one must remember that our own country bumpkin has perhaps a still narrower one; for the only matter in which he seems to indulge in any distinct æsthetic preference, to exercise any active taste for beauty, is in the choice of his sweetheart, and even there he is not always conspicuous for the refinement of his judgment. But there is a way in which one can really to some extent throw oneself into the mental attitude of a human being reduced in size so as to look at the moss-forest with the eye of a beetle, while retaining all the distinctive psychological traits of his advanced humanity: and that is by making himself a microscopic eye with the aid of a little pocket-lens. Even for those who do not want to use one scientifically, it opens a whole universe of new and delightful scenery in every tuft of grass and every tussock of wayside weeds; and by its aid I hope to show you this morning how far the eyes and æsthetic tastes of insects help us to account for the pedigree of our familiar childish friend the daisy. No fairy tale was ever more marvellous, and yet certainly no fairy tale was ever half so true.

Two or three years ago, lying in the sunshine on this self-same tangled undercliff, I dissected a daisy for the benefit of those readers of the *Cornhill* who were good enough to favour me with their kind attention. But that was a purely æsthetic dissection, for the sake of discovering what elements of beauty the daisy had got, and why they pleasurably affected our own senses or appealed with power to our higher emotions. To-day, however, I propose to dissect one of these daisies a little more physically, and unravel, if I can, the tangled skein of causes which have given it its present shape, and size, and colour, and arrangement. If you choose, you can each pick a daisy for yourselves, and pull it to pieces as I go along, to check off what I tell you; but if you are too lazy, or can't find one within reach, it doesn't much matter; for you can

at least carry the picture of so common a flower well enough in your mind's eye to follow what I have to say without one: and that is all that is at all necessary for my present purpose.

The question as to how the daisy came to be what it is is comparatively a new one. Until a short time ago everybody took it for granted that daisies had always been daisies, cowslips always cowslips, and primroses always primroses. But those new and truer views of nature which we owe to Mr. Darwin and Mr. Herbert Spencer have lately taught us that every plant and every animal has a long history of its own, and that this history leads us on through a wonderful series of continuous metamorphoses compared with which Daphne's or Arethusa's were mere single episodes. The new biology shows us that every living thing has been slowly moulded into its existing shape by surrounding circumstances, and that it bears upon its very face a thousand traces of its earlier stages. It thus invests the veriest weed or the tiniest insect with a fresh and endless interest: it elevates them at once into complex puzzles for our ingenuity—problems quite as amusing and ten times as instructive as those for whose solution the weekly papers offer such attractive and unattainable prizes. What is the meaning of this little spur? How did it get that queer little point? Why has it developed those fluffy little hairs? These are the questions which now crop up about every part of its form or structure. And just as surely as in surveying England we can set down Stonehenge and Avebury to its prehistoric inhabitants, Watling Street and the Roman Wall to its southern conquerors, Salisbury and Warwick to mediæval priests and soldiers, Liverpool and Manchester to modern coal and cotton—just so surely in surveying a flower or an insect can we set down each particular point to some special epoch in its ancestral development. This new view of nature invests every part of it with a charm and hidden meaning which very few among us had ever suspected before.

Pull your daisy to pieces carefully, and you will see that, instead of being a single flower, as we generally suppose at a rough glance, it is in reality a whole head of closely packed and very tiny flowers seated together upon a soft fleshy disk. Of these there are two kinds. The outer florets consist each of a single, long, white, pink-tipped ray, looking very much like a solitary petal: the inner ones consist each of a small, golden, bell-shaped blossom, with stamens and pistil in the centre, surrounded by a yellow corolla much like that of a Canterbury bell in shape, though differing greatly from it in size and colour. The daisy, in fact, is one of the great family of Composites, all of which have their flowers clustered into similar dense heads simulating a single blossom, and of which the sunflower forms perhaps the best example, because its florets are quite large enough to be separately observed even by the most careless eye.

Now, if you look closely at one of the central yellow florets in the daisy, you will see that its edge is vandyked into four or five separate pointed teeth exactly like those of the Canterbury bell. These teeth

clearly point back to a time when the ancestors of the daisy had five separate petals on each flower, as a dog-rose or a May-blossom still has. Again, before the flowers of the daisy had these five separate petals, they must have passed through a still earlier stage when they had no coloured petals at all. And as it is always simpler and easier to recount history in its natural order, from the first stages to the last, rather than to trace it backward from the last to the first, I shall make no apology for beginning the history of the daisy at the beginning, and pointing out as we go along the marks which each stage has left upon its present shape or its existing arrangement and colour.

The very earliest ancestor of the daisy, then, with which we need deal to-day, was an extremely simple and ancient flower, hardly recognisable as such to any save a botanical eye. And here I must begin, I fear, with a single paragraph of rather dull and technical matter, lest you should miss the meaning of some things I shall have to tell you in the sequel. If you look into the middle of a buttercup or a lily you know that you will see certain little yellow spikes and knobs within the petals, which form a sort of central rosette, and look as if they were put there merely to give finish and completeness to the whole blossom. But in reality these seemingly unimportant spikes and knobs are the most important parts, and the only indispensable parts, of the entire flower. The bright petals, which alone are what we generally have in our minds when we think of flowers, are comparatively useless and inessential organs: a vast number of flowers have not got them at all, and in those which have got them, their purpose is merely subsidiary and supplementary to that of the little central spikes and knobs. For the small yellow rosette consists of the stamens and pistils—the “essential floral organs,” as botanists call them. A flower may be complete with only a single stamen or a single pistil, apart from any petals or other bright and conspicuous surroundings, and some of the simplest flowers do actually consist of such separate parts alone; but without stamens and pistils there can be no possible flower at all. The object of the flower, indeed, is to produce fruit and seed, and the pistil is the seed-vessel in its earliest form; while the stamen manufactures the pollen, without which the seeds cannot possibly be matured within the capsules. In some species the stamens and pistils occur in separate flowers, or even on separate plants; in others, the stamens and pistils occur on the same plant or in the same flower, and this last is the case in almost all the blossoms with which we are most familiar. But the fundamental fact to bear in mind is this: that the stamens and pistils are the real and essential parts of the flower, and that all the rest is leather and prunella—mere outer decoration of these invariable and necessary organs. The petals and other coloured adjuncts are, as I hope to show you, nothing more than the ornamental clothing of the true floral parts; the stamens and pistils are the living things which they clothe and adorn. Now probably you know all this already, exactly as the readers of the weekly reviews know by this time all about

the personage whom we must not describe as Charlemagne, or the beings whom it is a mortal sin to designate as Anglo-Saxons. But then, just as there are possibly people in the worst part of the East End who still go hopelessly wrong about Karl and the Holy Roman Empire, and just as there are possibly people in remote country parishes who are still the miserable victims of the great Anglo-Saxon heresy, so, doubtless, there may yet be persons—say in the western parts of Cornwall or the Isle of Skye—who do not know the real nature of flowers; and these persons must not be wholly condemned because they happen not to be so wise as we ourselves and the *Saturday Review*. An eminent statistician calculates that Mr. Freeman has demolished the truculent Anglo-Saxon in 970 several passages, and yet there are even now persons who go on firmly believing in that mythical being's historical existence. And the moral of that is, as the Duchess would say, that you should never blame anyone for telling you something that you knew before; for it is better that ninety-nine wise men should be bored with a twice-told tale, than that one innocent person should be left in mortal error for lack of a short and not wholly unnecessary elementary explanation.

The simplest and earliest blossoms, then—to return from this didactic digression—were very small and inconspicuous flowers, consisting, probably, of a single stamen and a single pistil each. Of these simplest and earliest forms a few still luckily survive at the present day; for it is one of the rare happy chances in this queerly ordered universe of ours that evolution has almost always left all its footmarks behind it, visibly imprinted upon the earth through all its ages. When any one form develops slowly into another, it does not generally happen that the parent form dies out altogether; on the contrary, it usually lingers on somewhere, in some obscure and unnoticed corner, till science at last comes upon it unawares, and fits it into its proper place in the scale of development. We have still several fish in the very act of changing into amphibians left in a few muddy tropical streams; and several oviparous creatures in the very act of changing into mammals left in the isolated continent of Australia; and so we have also many low, primitive, or simple forms of plants and animals left in many stray situations in every country. Amongst them are some of these earliest ancestral flowers. On almost every wayside pond you will find all the year round a green film of slimy duckweed. This duckweed is, as it were, the Platonic idea of a flowering plant—the generic type common to them all reduced to its simplest elements. It has no roots, no stem, no branches, no visible blossom, no apparent seed; it consists merely of solitary, roundish, floating leaves, budding out at the edge into other leaves, and so spreading till it covers the whole pond. But if you look closely into the slimy mass in summer time, you may be lucky enough to catch the weed in flower—though not unless you have a quick eye and a good pocket-lens. The flowers consist of one, or sometimes two, stamens and a pistil, growing naked out of the edge of the leaf. No one but a bota-

nist could ever recognise their nature at all, for they look like mere yellowish specks on the slender side of the green frond ; but the pistil contains true seeds, and the stamens produce true pollen, and from the botanical standpoint that settles the question of their floral nature at once. They are, in fact, the simplest original form of flower, preserved to our own day on small stagnant ponds, where the competition of other plants does not press them hard as it has pressed their congeners hard on dry land or in open lakes and rivers. From some such simple form as this we may be pretty sure that all existing flowering plants are ultimately descended.

In most modern flowers, however, each blossom contains several stamens and several carpels (or pistil-divisions), and the way in which such a change as this might come about can be easily imagined ; for even in many existing plants, where the separate flowers have only a single stamen or a single pistil each, they are nevertheless so closely packed together that they almost form a single compound flower, as in the case of the bur-reed and the various catkins, not to mention the arum and the spurge, where only a trained eye can make out the organic separateness. I shall not trouble you much, however, with these earlier stages in the development of the daisy, both because I have already described them here in part, *à propos* of other subjects, and because the later stages are at once more interesting and more really instructive. It must suffice to say that at some very ancient period the ancestors of the daisy, and of one half the other modern flowers, had acquired an arrangement of stamens and pistils in groups of five, so that each compound flower had as a rule a pistil of five or ten carpels, surrounded by a row of five or ten stamens. And almost all their existing descendants still bear obvious traces of this original arrangement in rows of fives. On the other hand, the ancestors of our lilies, and of the other half of our modern flowers, had about the same period acquired an arrangement in rows of three. And of this other ternary arrangement almost all their existing descendants still bear similar traces. In fact, most flowers at the present day show clear signs of being derived either from the original five-stamened or the original three-stamened blossom. I don't mean to say that this is the only mark of distinction between the two great groups : on the contrary, it is only a very minor one ; but it is for our present purpose the one of capital importance.

This very primitive five-parted common ancestor of the daisy, the rose, the buttercup, and our other quinary flowers, was still an extremely simple and inconspicuous blossom. It had merely green leaves and plain flower-stems, surmounted by a row of five or ten stamens, enclosing five or ten carpels. Perhaps beneath them there may have been a little row of cup-shaped green bracts, the predecessors of the calyx which supports all modern flowers ; but of this we cannot be at all sure. At any rate, it had no bright-coloured petals. The origin of these petals, as I have already explained to readers of this magazine, is due to the eyes and

selective tastes of insects; and I must now briefly recapitulate the facts once more, so far as they refer to the special ancestry of the daisy.

No pistil ever grows into a perfect fruit or sets ripe and good seeds unless it is fertilised by a grain of pollen from a stamen of its own kind. In some plants the pollen is simply allowed to fall from the stamens on to the pistil of the same flower; but plants thus self-fertilised are not so strong or so hearty as those which are cross-fertilised by the pollen of another. The first system resembles in its bad effects the habit of "breeding in and in" among animals, or of too close intermarriages among human beings; while the second system produces the same beneficial results as those of cross-breeding, or the introduction of "fresh blood" in the animate world. Hence, any early plants which happened to be so constituted as to allow of easy cross-fertilisation would be certain to secure stronger and better seedlings than their self-fertilised neighbours; and wherever any peculiar form or habit has tended to encourage this mode of setting seeds, the plants have always prospered and thriven exceedingly in the struggle for existence with their less fortunate congeners. A large number of flowers have thus become specially adapted for fertilisation by the wind, as we see in the case of catkins and grasses, where the stamens hang out in long pendulous clusters, and the pollen is easily wafted by the breeze from their waving filaments to the pistils of surrounding flowers. In such cases as these, the stamens are generally very long and mobile, so that the slightest breath shakes them readily; while the sensitive surface of the pistil is branched and feathery, so as readily to catch any stray passing grain of wind-borne pollen.

But there are other flowers which have adopted a different method of getting the pollen conveyed from one blossom to another, and that is upon the head and legs of honey-eating insects. From the very first, insects must have been fond of visiting flowers for the sake of the pollen, which they used to eat up without performing any service to the plant in return, as they still feloniously do in the case of several wind-fertilised species; and to counteract this bad habit on the part of their unbidden guests, the flowers seem to have developed a little store of honey (which the insects prefer to pollen), and thus to have turned their visitors from plundering enemies into useful allies and friends. For even the early pollen-eaters must often unintentionally have benefited the plant, by carrying pollen on their heads and legs from one flower to another; but when once the plant took to producing honey, the insects largely gave up their habit of plundering the pollen, and went from blossom to blossom in search of the sweet nectar instead. As they did so, they brushed the grains of pollen from the stamens of one blossom against the pistil of the next, and so enabled the flowers to set their seed more economically than before.

Simultaneously with this change from fertilisation by the wind to fertilisation by insects, there came in another improvement in the mechanism of flowers. Probably the primitive blossom consisted only of stamens

and pistil, with, at best, a single little scale or leaf as a protection to each. But some of the five-rowed flowers now began to change the five stamens of the outer row into petals; that is to say, to produce broad, bright-coloured, and papery flower-rays in the place of these external stamens. The reason why they did so was to attract the insects by their brilliant hues; or, to put it more correctly, those flowers which happened to display brilliant hues as a matter of fact attracted insects best, and so got fertilised oftener than their neighbours. This tendency on the part of stamens to grow into petals is always very marked, and by taking advantage of it, gardeners are enabled to produce what we call double flowers; that is to say, flowers in which all the stamens have been thus broadened and flattened into ornamental rays. Even amongst wild flowers, the white water-lily shows us every gradation between fertile pollen-bearing true stamens and barren broad-bladed petals. To put it shortly and dogmatically, petals are in every case merely specialised stamens, which have given up their original function of forming pollen, in order to adopt the function of attracting insects.

The five-rowed ancestors of the daisy found a decided advantage in thus setting apart one outer row of stamens as coloured advertisements to lure the insects to the honey, while they left the inner rows to do all the real work of pollen-making. They very rapidly spread over the world, and assumed very various forms in various places. But wherever they went, they always preserved more or less trace of their quinary arrangement; and to this day, if you pick almost any flower belonging to the same great division of dicotyledons (the name is quite unimportant), you will find that it has at least some trace of its original arrangement in rows of five. The common stonecrop and its allies keep up the arrangement best of any; for they have each, as a rule, five petals; each petal has its separate bract, making a calyx or flower-cup of five pieces or sepals; inside are one or two rows of five stamens each; and in the centre, a pistil of five carpels. Such complete and original symmetry as this is not now common; but almost all the five-rowed flowers retain the same general character in a somewhat less degree. The buttercup, for example, has one outer row of five sepals, then five petals, and then several crowded rows of stamens and carpels. And in the petals at least the harmony is generally complete. There are five in the dog-rose, in the violet, in the pea-blossom, in the pink, in the geranium, and (speaking generally) in almost every plant that grows in our gardens, our fields, or our woodlands, unless it belongs to the other great division of trinary flowers, with all their organs in groups of three. And now, if you will pull open one of the inner yellow florets of your daisy, you will see that it has five stamens, and five little lobes to the bell-shaped corolla, to show its ancestry plainly on its face, and "to witness if I lie."

But the original bright-coloured ancestor of the daisy must have had five separate petals, like the dog-rose or the apple-blossom at the present day. How then did these petals grow together into a single bell-shaped

corolla, as we see them now in the finished daisy? Well, the stages and the reasons are not difficult to guess. As flowers and insects went on developing side by side, certain flowers learnt to adapt themselves better and better to their special insects, while the insects in return learnt to adapt themselves better and better to their special flowers. As bees and butterflies got a longer proboscis with which to dive after honey into the recesses of the blossoms, the blossoms on their part got a deeper tube in which to hide their honey from all but the proper insects. Sometimes this is done, as in the larkspur, the violet, and the garden nasturtium, by putting the honey at the bottom of a long spur or blind sac; and if you bite off the end of the sac in the nasturtium you will find a very appreciable quantity of nectar stored up in it. But most highly specialised flowers have hit upon a simpler plan, which is to run all their petals together at the bottom into a tube, so long that no useless insect can rob the honey without fertilising the plant, and so arranged that the proboscis of the bee or butterfly can rub against the stamens and pistil on the way down. In pinks and their allies we see some rude approach to this mode of growth; for there each petal has a long claw (as it is called), bearing the expanded part at the end; and these claws when firmly pressed together by the calyx practically form a tube in five pieces: but in the perfectly tubular flowers, like the primrose, the arrangement is carried a great deal further; for there we have the claws all grown into a single piece, with the expanded petals forming a continuous fringe of five deeply-cleft lobes, representing the five original and separate pieces of the pinks.* Now, in the primrose, again, we still find the five petals quite distinct at the edge, though their lower portion has grown together into a regular tube; but in the Canterbury bell we see that the whole blossom has become bell-shaped, and that the five originally separate petals are only indicated by five slightly projecting points or lobes which give the tubular corolla its vandyked margin. And if you look at the little central florets of the daisy or the sunflower, you will observe that they too exactly resemble the Canterbury bell in this particular. Hence we can see that their ancestors, after passing through stages analogous to those of the pinks and the primroses, at last reached a completely united and tubular or campanulate form, like that of the heath or the Canterbury bell.

There is one minor point, however, in the development of the daisy which I only notice because I am so afraid of that terrible person, the microscopic critic. This very learned and tedious being goes about the world proclaiming to everybody that you don't know something because you don't happen to mention it; and for fear of him one is often obliged to trouble one's readers with petty matters of detail which really make no difference at all except to such Smelfunguses in person. Being them-

* Of course I do not mean to imply that daisies or primroses are descended from pinks; that would convey a wholly mistaken notion: but merely that the ancestors of the daisy once passed through a somewhat analogous stage, when they resembled the pinks in this particular.

selves accustomed to weary us with the whole flood of their own unspeakable erudition, every time they open their mouths they imagine that everybody else must be ignorant of anything which he doesn't expressly state; as though you might never talk of a railway journey without giving at full the theory of kinetic energy as applied to the coal in the furnace. For their sake, then, I must add, that when the daisy's ancestors had reached a level of development equivalent to that of the heath and the Canterbury bell, they differed in one respect from them just as the primrose still does. In the heath and the harebell, the stamens remain quite separate from the tube formed by the petals; but in the primrose and the daisy, the stalks of the stamens (filaments, the technical botanists call them) have coalesced with the petals, so that the pollen seems to hang out in little bags from the walls of the tube itself. This is a further advance in the direction of specialised arrangements for insect-fertilisation; and it shows very simply the sort of cross-connections which we often get among plants or animals. For while the daisy is more like the Canterbury bell in the shape of its corolla, it is more like the primrose in the arrangement of its stamens. Or, to put it more plainly, while the Canterbury bell has hit upon one mode of adaptation in the form of its tube, and while the primrose has hit upon another mode in the insertion of its stamens, the daisy has hit upon both together, and has combined them in a single flower. And now, my dear Smelfungus, having given way to your prejudices upon this matter, allow me to assure you that nothing will induce me to enter into the further and wholly immaterial difference between hypogynous and epigynous corollas. For everyone but you, the very names, I am sure, will be quite sufficient apology for my reticence. These, in fact, are subjects which, like the "old familiar Decline and Fall off the Rooshian Empire," had better be discussed "in the absence of Mrs. Boffin."

When the ancestors of the daisy had reached the stage of united tubular blossoms, like the harebell, with stamens fastened to the inside wall of the tube, like the primrose, they must, on the whole, have resembled in shape the flowers of the common wild white comfrey, more nearly than any other familiar English plant. The next step was to crowd a lot of these bell-shaped blossoms together into a compact head. If you compare a cowslip with a primrose, you can easily understand how this is done. According to many of our modern botanists, cowslips and primroses are only slightly divergent varieties of a single species; and in any case they are very closely related to one another. But in the primrose, the separate blossoms spring each on a long stalk of its own from near the root; while in the cowslip, the common stem from which they all spring is raised high above the ground, and the minor flower stalks are much shortened. Thus, instead of a bunch of distinct flowers, you get a loose head of crowded flowers. Increase their number, shorten their stalks a little more, and pack them closely side by side, and you would have a compound or composite flower like the daisy. In fact, we often

find in nature almost every intermediate stage: for instance, among the pea tribe we have all but solitary flowers in the peas and beans, long clusters in the laburnum and wistaria, and compact heads in the clovers. The daisies and other composites, it is true, carry this crowding of flowers somewhat further than almost any other plants; but still even here you can trace a gradual progress, some approach to their habit being made by allied families elsewhere; while some composites, on the other hand, have stopped short of the pitch of development attained by most of their race. Thus, certain campanulas have their flowers packed tightly together into a head, which looks at first sight a single blossom, just as deceptively as the daisy does; and a still nearer relative, the scabious, even more strikingly resembles the composite form. So that the daisies and their allies have really only carried out one step further a system of crowding which had been already begun by many other plants.

If you look closely at the daisy, you will see in what this crowding consists. The common flower-stalk is flattened out at the end into a regular disk, and on this disk all the florets are seated with no appreciable separate flower-stalks of their own. Outside them a double row of leaves is arranged, exactly like the calyx in single flowers, and serving the same protective purpose—to preserve the florets from the incursions of unfriendly insects; while inside, the little individual blossoms have almost lost their own calyxes, which are scarcely represented by a few tiny protuberances upon the seed-like fruit. In the daisy, indeed, we may say that the true calyx has been dwarfed away to nothing; but in the dandelion and many other composites a new use has been found for it; it has been turned into those light feathery hairs which children call “the clock,” and which aid the dispersion of the seeds by wafting them about before the wind.

Now, what has made the daisy and the other composites grow so small and thickset? Probably the need for attracting insects. By thus combining their mass of bloom, they are enabled to make a great show in the world, and to secure the fertilisation of a great many flowers at once by each insect which visits the head. For each floret has its own little store of honey, its own stamens, and its own pistil containing an embryo fruit; and when a bee lights upon a daisy head, he turns round and round, extracting all he can get from every tiny tube, and so fertilising the whole number of florets at a single time. The result at least proves that the principle is a good one; for few flowers get so universally fertilised, or set their seed so regularly, as the composites. Though they must have reached their present very high state of evolution at a comparatively recent period, they have spread already over the whole world; and they are far more numerous, both in individuals, in species, and in genera, than any other family of flowering plants. In fact, they are undoubtedly the dominant tribe of the whole vegetable kingdom. When I say that in Britain alone they number no less than 120 species, including such common and universal weeds as the daisy, dandelion, thistles, groundsel, camomile, milfoil, hawkweed, and burdock,

it will be clear that nine out of every ten ordinary wayside blossoms which we see on any country walk are members of this highly evolved, ubiquitous, and extremely successful family.

Still, we are far from having finished the pedigree of the daisy. We have traced its general genealogy down as far as the common composite stock : we have now to trace its special derivation from the early common composite type to the distinctive daisy form. Clearly one great point in the daisy's history is yet untouched upon ; and that is the nature and meaning of the white rays. We know that the inner yellow florets are (as it were) dwarfed and specialised golden harebells ; but we do not yet know what is the origin of these long outer streamers, which look so wholly unlike the tiny and regular central bells.

In solving this problem, the other composites will help us not a little ; for we must always seek in the simpler for the interpretation of the more complex ; and the daisy, instead of being the simplest, is one of the most developed representatives of the composite pattern. If you turn to that tall, rank-looking weed growing yonder, under cover of the hedge, you will get a good surviving example of the earliest form of composite. The weed is a eupatory—"hemp agrimony" the country people call it—and it has small heads, each containing a few tubular purple florets, all exactly the same size and shape, and all much more loosely gathered together than in the daisy or the dandelion. The eupatory is interesting as preserving for us one of the first stages in the ancestry of the higher composites, after they had attained to their distinctive family characteristics. Once more, I don't wish you to understand that the daisies are descended from the eupatory : all I mean is, that their ancestors must once have passed through an analogous stage ; and that the eupatory has never got beyond it, while the daisies have gone on still further differentiating and adapting themselves till they reached their present peculiar form. Now, if you compare this daisy with the head of eupatory, you will see that they differ in two particulars :—the daisy has outer rays, while the eupatory has none ; and the inner daisy florets are yellow, while the eupatory florets are purple. The latter difference is probably distinctive and original : in other words, when the daisy's ancestors were in the eupatory stage of development, they had apparently all their florets yellow. This is likely, because almost all the modern composites of every sort have yellow central florets, and most of them have yellow rays as well. It is only a few kinds that have red or purple central florets ; and, as we shall soon see, only a few also that have white or pink outer rays.

What, then, made the daisy's ancestors produce a row of external florets so different in shape and colour from the internal ones ? The answer is exactly analogous to that which I have already given for the origin of petals themselves. Compare the eupatory with the daisy once more, and you will see that the one is comparatively inconspicuous, while the other is very noticeable and bright-coloured. The row of

green bracts almost hides the blossoms of the eupatory; but the large white rays make a bold and effective advertisement for the daisy. Certain composites, in fact, have just repeated the same device by which the earliest petal-bearing flowers sought to attract the notice of insects. Those early flowers, as we saw, set apart one outer row of stamens as bright-coloured petals; these later compound flower-heads have set apart one outer row of florets as bright-coloured rays. If you examine the rays closely, you will see that each of them is a separate little flower, with the stamens suppressed, and with the bell-shaped corolla flattened out into a long and narrow ribbon. Even these very abnormal corollas, however, still retain a last trace of the five original distinct petals; for their edge is slightly notched with five extremely minute lobes, often nearly obliterated, but sometimes quite marked, and almost always more or less noticeable on a careful examination. A daisy thus consists of a whole head of tiny tubular bells, the inner ones normal and regular, with corolla, stamens, and pistil, and the outer ones flattened or ligulate, with the stamens wanting, and the entire floret simply devoted to increasing the attractiveness of the compound mass. Pull off the rays, and you will see at once what an inconspicuous flower the daisy would be without them.

Last of all, the question arises, Why are the outer florets or rays pink and white, while the inner florets or bells are golden yellow? When we have solved that solitary remaining problem, we shall have settled the chief points in the daisy's pedigree. Clearly, when the rays were first produced, they must have been yellow like the central florets. The mere flattening and lengthening of the corolla would not in itself tend to alter the colour. And as a matter of fact, the vast mass of those composites which have progressed to the stage of having rays—which have got these two separate forms of flowers, for show and for use respectively—have the rays of the same colour as the central bells, that is to say, generally yellow. Of this stage the sunflower is a familiar and very striking representative. It has bright golden central florets, and large expanded rays of the same colour. To anybody who wants to study the structure of the daisy without a microscope, the sunflower is quite as valuable and indispensable as it is to our most advanced æsthetic school in painting and decoration. Moreover, it shows us admirably this intermediate stage, when the compound flower-head has acquired a distinct row of outer attractive florets, adding wealth and expansiveness to its display of colour, but when it has not yet attempted any specialisation of hue in these purely ornamental organs. The daisy, however, together with the camomile, the ox-eye daisy, and many other similar composites, has carried the process one step further. It has coloured its rays white, and has even begun to tinge them with pink. This makes these highest of all composites the most successful plants in the whole world. If one considers that daisies begin to bloom on the 1st of January, and go on flowering till the 31st of December; that they occur in almost every field

far more abundantly than any other blossom; and that each one of them is not a single flower, but a whole head of flowers—it will be quite clear that they are much more numerous than any rival species. And when we add to them the other very common white-rayed composites, such as the camomiles, many of which abound almost as freely in their own haunts and at their proper season, it is obvious that this highly-evolved composite type is the dominant plant race of the old world at least. In the new world, their place is taken by a somewhat more developed type still, that of the Michaelmas daisies, which have their rays even more ornamental than our own, and brightly coloured with mauve or lilac pigment. All the world over, however, in and out of the tropics, the commonest, most numerous, and most successful of plants are ray-bearing composites of one kind or another, like the daisies, with the rays differing in colour from the central florets.

Finally, it may, perhaps, at first hearing, sound absurd to say that the daisy group, including these other composites with tinted rays, forms the very head and crown of the vegetable creation, as man does in the animal creation: and yet it is none the less true. We are so accustomed to look upon a daisy as a humble, commonplace, almost insignificant little flower, that it seems queer to hear it described as a higher type of plant life than the tall pine-tree or the spreading oak. But as a matter of fact, the pine is a very low type indeed, as is also the giant tree of California, both of them belonging to the earliest and simplest surviving family of flowering plants, the conifers, which are no better, comparatively speaking, among plants, than the monstrous saurians and fish-like reptiles of the secondary age were among animals. If size were any criterion of relative development, then the whale would take precedence of all other mammals, and man would rank somewhere below the gorilla and the grizzly bear. But if we take complexity and perfection in the adaptation of the organism to its surroundings as our gauge of comparative evolution, then the daisies must rank in the very first line of plant economy. For if we follow down their pedigree in the inverse order, we shall see that, inasmuch as they have coloured rays, they are superior to all their yellow-rayed allies (for example, the sunflower); and inasmuch as these have rays, they are superior to all rayless composites (for example, the eupatory); and inasmuch as composites generally have clustered heads, they are superior to all other flowers with separate tubular corollas (for example, the heathers); while all these, again, are superior to those with separate petals (for example, the roses); and all petalled flowers are superior to all petalless kinds (for example, the pines and oaks). Thus, from the strict biological point of view, it becomes quite clear that the daisies, asters, chrysanthemums, and other rayed composites with coloured outer florets, really stand to other plants in the same relation as man stands towards other animals. That is what gives such a special and exceptional interest to the daisy's pedigree.

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Punch and Pulcinella.

IN the familiar spectacle of our streets and alleys the effect of the national fireside ideal of life in modifying an imported type is not less strongly exemplified than in the higher walks of art. For while, on Pulcinella's native soil, his bachelor escapades and mishaps in courtship and wooing furnish the favourite entertainment of his *lazzaroni* audience, it is the privacy of Mr. Punch's hearth and home that is laid bare for the edification of the British public, and the somewhat strained state of his family relations that forms the subject of the drama at which they are invited to assist. Thus, even this disreputable wanderer, by appearing before us in the sacred character of husband and father, and transforming himself into what our French neighbours call *un homme d'intérieur*, casts a halo of English respectability over the doubtful antecedents of his vagrant career that not even his slightly exaggerated notions of conjugal discipline and mistaken views on nursery management altogether suffice to dissipate.

But our vagabond friend, if we may believe antiquarians, can lay claim to our respect on another and more unexpected ground—that of classical association and aristocratic antiquity of descent. And as in other pedigrees the mere fact of remoteness is held to ennoble ancestors whose deeds might not otherwise seem a title to honour, we may be excused from looking too closely into the character of the early Oscan dramas, or Atellan farces, in which our popular hero is supposed to have his prototype. Suffice it to say that they were ancient rustic performances, depending very much for their power to amuse on rude buffoonery and wit of the broadest sort. Having survived, in remote districts, from pre-historical down to classical times, they were introduced to Roman audiences from the Campanian town of Atella, the modern Aversa, close to which is Acerra, the traditional home of the Neapolitan Pulcinella.

A conspicuous figure in these rustic farces was a character called Maccus, and in a small bronze statue of this personage discovered in Rome in 1727, but only known to us now from engravings, we recognise the deformed figure, exaggerated nose, and staring eyes so familiar to us on our puppet stage. But it is a singular circumstance that these characteristics are much more distinctly traceable in the expatriated Punch than in his Neapolitan original, who is simply a blundering clown, clad in a loose white blouse or smock frock, and wearing a black mask over the lower part of his face. As Andrea Perrucci, the writer of a book published in Naples in 1699, claims the creation of this part for a

comedian named Silvio Fiorillo, who lived some time previously, when the original of the English Punch must have already started or been about to start on his travels, we may perhaps conclude that this actor developed or improved upon a previously existing type preserved unchanged in the more primitive drama of the wandering showman.

Punch, with many other foreign visitors of still more questionable character, made his first appearance in England shortly after the Restoration. We may safely conclude that "the famous Italian puppet-play" witnessed by Pepys at Covent Garden, on May 9, 1662, where he says there was "great resort of gallants," and by John Evelyn five years later, was no other than the drama of which the immortal hunchback is the hero. In neither of these records, indeed, is he mentioned by name; but under a later date, April 30, 1669, the following passage occurs in Pepys' diary: "Among poor people there in the alley, did hear them call their fat child Punch, which pleased me mightily, that word being become a word of common use for all that is thick and short." And in Aubrey's *Surrey*, in describing a room in Sir Samuel Lely's house at Whitehall, he says, "On the top was a Punchinello holding a dial"—two instances of the use of the word which leave no doubt that the character was already familiar to the English public.

We next find our hero, about the year 1703, at Bartholomew Fair, enlivening by his wit a puppet-play representing the "Creation of the World," a survival of the old miracle or mystery plays. At a similar spectacle at Bath, in 1709, Punch and his wife danced in the ark with spirits unsubdued by the cosmic catastrophe of the deluge, which formed the subject of the drama, and the incorrigible jester, putting his head out to survey the rising waters, remarked aside to the patriarch, "It is a little foggy, Mr. Noah."

In the *Spectator* of March 16, 1710-11, appears a letter, written in the character of the under-sexton of St. Paul's, Covent Garden, complaining that his congregation took the warning of his bell, morning and evening, "to go to a puppet-show set forth by one Powell, under the Piazzas," and begging that for the future Punchinello may be persuaded to choose less canonical hours. From another letter in the same paper we gather that "Whittington and his Oat" was the piece which competed so detrimentally with the attractions of the Church, and that there appeared in it a trained pig, which in the first scene danced a minuet with Punch. This puppet-theatre was the favourite lounge of the fashionable world, and among the most frequented places of amusement of its day; but since then the fame of Punch has been sadly on the wane.

No longer delighting by his freaks the idle hours of the upper ten thousand, he has had to stoop to furnish recreation to the lowest grades of society, and we see him reduced to seek an audience in the miscellaneous crowd of a by-street, among the gaping rustics of a village fair, or in the midst of the disreputable concourse at a provincial race meet-

ing. Meantime, his once varied repertory has shrunk to a single piece, which has survived all the others by some inscrutable working of the laws of taste. Thus caught up, as it were, by a side-eddy, withdrawn from the main current of life, and circling as a stray waif in its backwaters, how long will it be before he is finally stranded with all the other flotsam and jetsam of the shore?

It was in his passage through France that our itinerant adopted some of those characteristics by which he is known to us. His first appearance in French history is in the garb of a political satirist in the year 1649, when a letter to Cardinal Mazarin was signed in his name, and concluded with these lines:—

Je suis Polichinelle
Qui fait la sentinelle
A la porte de Nesle.

This was in point of fact the spot where the famous Jean Brioché, or Briocci, the prince of puppet-players, had not long before established himself with his miniature troupe, of which Polichinelle was the central figure. It is here that we find the first suggestion of that canine companion whose antics we are accustomed to associate with those of Punch, though not a dog, but an ape, was the original partner of his performance. This was no other than the illustrious Fagotin, known as *le Singe de Brioché*, whose varied accomplishments and tragical end have earned for him an historical reputation. So apt was his counterfeit of humanity as to delude the noted duellist Cyrano de Bergerac, who, taking him for a lacquey, and believing his gesticulations to be meant for personal ridicule of himself, drew his sword and ran the poor little comedian through the body. This event, which occurred in 1655, was the subject of a pamphlet, and in it we find the following description of Fagotin's get up:—

Il était grand comme un petit homme, et bouffon en diable; son maître l'avait coiffé d'un vieux vigogne, dont un plumet cachait les fissures et la colle; il luy avait ceint le cou d'une fraise à la Scaramouche; il luy faisait porter un pourpoint à six basques mouvantes, garni de passements et d'aiguillettes, vêtement qui sentait le laquéisme; il luy avait concédé un baudrier, d'où pendait une lame sans pointe.

The individual Fagotin was dead, but the type survived, forming thenceforward an indispensable part of every puppet performance; and we can perceive from the foregoing description that the mantle of Brioché's murdered ape has fallen on Punch's four-footed ally, the dog Toby. The elder Brioché was succeeded by his son; and during the lives of these two men Polichinelle remained a prominent figure in Parisian society, his escapades attaining sufficient importance to draw down the censures of Bossuet. There, as in England, however, obscurity has since overtaken him, and he has disappeared, probably for ever, from social and historical notoriety.

We must visit Pulcinella at home to find him at the present day, in

possession of a local habitation and a fixed abode, for in Naples he still has his theatre, where he reigns the hero of the performance. Yet even here, on his native soil, his supremacy has within the last few months been seriously threatened by the appearance of a rival, who, under the name of Sciosciammocca, has entered upon a contest with him for popular favour. At present public opinion seems to have gone over to the innovator, whose wit and smartness are an irresistible attraction. Those, however, who are constant to their former idol believe that he will in the end triumph over the usurper, and as a national type be ultimately preferred to a character embodying a universal one. Fools and blunderers of the stamp of Sciosciammocca, they contend, are to be found all the world over, while the originals of Pulcinella exist nowhere but in Naples, and are there found in somewhat too great abundance.

The Neapolitan buffoon is one of the last of those traditional characters, survivals of the classic mimes, round whom the personages and incidents of Italian comedy down to the last century were inevitably grouped. These stereotyped figures were always invested with the same costume and attributes, and were distinguished by wearing masks; a reminiscence, doubtless, of the primitive votaries of Thespis, who were accustomed to stain their faces with the lees of wine or some other substance, in order to prevent the scenic illusion from being destroyed by the recognition of their individual personality. Of these typical masks, Pulcinella is the sole extant representative, and it would therefore be matter for regret that this remaining link of continuity with the past should be broken by the spirit of modern innovation.

The lineal descendant of the Oscan Punch, or Maccus, has little in common with his British namesake, to whom his relationship seems at first sight rather remote. Pulcinella, in the first place, is not played by a puppet, but by a human actor; neither has he those peculiarities of figure which we are accustomed to associate with the name. His features we do not see, as they are hidden by his black mask, and his dress, consisting of a white smock frock, baggy trousers, and peaked bonnet of the same colour, is somewhat of a surprise to us. His speech, of course, is the broadest Neapolitan dialect, unintelligible to foreign ears, but racy and pungent to those who understand it, and seasoned, be it observed, with wit not always of the most refined. Pulcinella, thus attired, represents a rustic simpleton newly arrived from his native district of Acerra, and his perpetual scrapes and misadventures in the unaccustomed atmosphere of the city are the ordinary subjects of the piece.

He is locked up in a lunatic asylum, and cudgels all the inmates, including the doctor; or, imprisoned by mistake, after effecting his escape, he loses his way and finds himself back in his dungeon. He has prepared himself a breakfast of macaroni swimming in tomato sauce, and is gloating over it in anticipation, when a series of visitors arrive in succession, and, sitting down without ceremony, help themselves to the tempting dish until nothing is left to the lawful owner. His helpless dismay as he

assists at the demolition of his repast is irresistibly ludicrous. He is enamoured of a pretty young girl, but in proposing for her to her aunt manages to make his offer in such ambiguous language that the elder lady takes it to herself. She plans her future ménage in high delight, becomes more and more confidential and communicative, until at last by a chance word she betrays to her supposed suitor the misapprehension she is labouring under. He bluntly disclaims the possibility of such an idea, ungallantly informing her that she is much too old, which draws down upon him a storm of Neapolitan Billingsgate, and he has to beat a speedy retreat under a sharp fire of all available projectiles.

In Pulcinella's theatre, the San Carlino, we have in short the most perfect reproduction of the street life of Naples, with its joyous animation, sudden outbursts of violence, and general aspect of jovial good humour. The dialogue has all the verve of improvisation, the action the spontaneous fire of the inspiration of the moment. It is difficult to believe that anything has been rehearsed or studied beforehand. Pulcinella and his companions seem to be living their daily life in our presence, just as their compatriots out of doors appear to enact a perpetual drama for our benefit. In our memory afterwards, the two sets of pictures blend into a single whole, in which the classic mask of the Campanian buffoon seems no anachronism, nor his ludicrous adventures a caricature. Elsewhere indeed he would be out of place, and it is not surprising that he should never have travelled far from Naples without undergoing a total transformation.

In the hero of the puppet drama to which he has given his name, his proper characteristics were speedily obliterated, to give place to the more accentuated type required for that class of performance. Even here, however, they were originally retained, for in one of Pinelli's old engravings of Rome a street puppet show appears, with Pulcinella clad in his traditional garb of white blouse and black half-mask.

The origin of his name has long been a puzzle to etymologists, and many ingenious surmises have been hazarded in reference to it. One writer has invented a mythical character called Puccio Aniello; another an equally imaginary Paolo Cinelli; a third an individual of the surname of Polliceno, in order to supply a satisfactory derivative. The most generally accepted interpretation, however, is that which regards Pulcinella as the diminutive of *pulcino*, a chicken, in allusion either to the squeaky voice or beak-like nose of the personage so named. It is curious, however, that the word in its earlier forms always appears to have had an extra syllable, which would seem to militate against this hypothesis, and is written *Polecenella*, *Policinella*, &c. The truth is that in manufacturing names for the typical characters, of which the Italian stage was so prolific, their inventors often attended more to sound than sense, as in the name of Giangurgolo, the Calabrian buffoon; of Scapino, the original of Molière's celebrated trickster, and a host of similar comic figures.

As regards the English corruption, Punch, it is curious that the same combination of letters should have been introduced into the language over again through a different and totally independent channel. As the name of the beverage, it is derived from the Hindu word *punch*, five, (short *a*, pronounced like *u*), in reference to the five ingredients combined in it, brandy, water, lime-juice, sugar, and spice, the art of brewing which into a refreshing compound we owe to our Indian fellow-subjects. With the word "puncheon," again, the name of the puppet hero has no connection, though its application to a short, thickset figure may seem to suggest it. *Poinçon*, in French, is an instrument for drilling holes, and the wine-vessel is supposed to have received the same name from having been stamped with a distinctive mark by it, just as "hogshead" is a corruption of "oxhead," the brand by which that measure was formerly distinguished.

But whatever the original associations of the word "Pulcinella," it has come to be synonymous with any character provocative of popular mirth, and is now used through the whole of Southern Italy in this wider and more elastic sense. Thus, in Sicily and Calabria, the name is appropriated during carnival time to sets of mummers or masqueraders, whose performances, called *Pulcinellate*,* *Farse di Carnevale*, or *Carne-scialate*, are perhaps a closer reproduction of the original Atellan farces than any more regular form of dramatic entertainment. Two or three merry fellows go about masked, playing various instruments, a lute, a cymbal, and a tambourine, singing or reciting a rude dialogue before the shops where different varieties of provisions are sold, and receiving from each a contribution in kind. Thus, they stop first to address their petition to the vendor of paste or macaroni, and Pulcinella No. 1 leads off in the following strain :—

Good master dear, a loving friend is here,
Come with his lute, an old and faithful crony,
To try the flavour of your macaroni.

Pulcinella 2 follows suit.

Friends one and two and three, good master, here we be,
With loving suit to touch your heart so stony,
And Pulcinella's here, with lute and merry cheer,
On purpose come to taste your macaroni.

Being presented with the donation as requested, the three sing a chorus of thanksgiving, and the first speaker then asks to be shown the residence of the hostess of the neighbouring tavern.

I prithee show where lives the tavern-hostess,
With skin like new bleached linen, but so artful,
She gains five farthings clear on ev'ry cartful.

I love the pretty vintneress whose boast 'tis
To fill the glass, but when the froth is off it,
There's nothing left, and so she makes her profit.

* An interesting account of these performances is given by Signor Apollo Lumini in his book, *Le Sacre Rappresentazioni nei Secoli xiv. etc.*

They then lay siege to mine hostess in the same style as above, but with exaggerated language of hyperbolic compliment in deference to her sex, and, having been regaled with wine, proceed to the butcher's, and a variety of other shops.

When they have collected a store of bread, sausages, cheese, and other comestibles, they returned home singing :—

Friends one and two and three, the chase is over,
The sportsman drops his musket and, moreover,
Would see his prey beneath a steaming cover.
Friends one and all, there chimes the evening bell,
The goatherd goes his round his milk to sell;
The night has come, so kindly fare ye well!

In these primitive dialogues, always recited of course in the popular dialect, we are more likely to find the traditional type of Pulcinella than in any set performance. Perhaps, too, they may help to elucidate the origin of his name. Among the ancient Greeks a similar practice prevailed of going about on holidays to solicit gifts in kind, the petition being made in the name of various kinds of birds, and the *Crow Song* and the *Swallow Song*, sung on these occasions, are still extant. It is a very strange coincidence that in remote parts of Ireland the same custom still exists in connection with the wren, which is hunted and killed on the 26th of December to be carried through the streets on a furze bush decked with ribbons, while the *Wren Song* is sung and alms collected from door to door. The animosity to the wren is accounted for by a popular legend that the projected surprise of a Danish camp was frustrated by one of these little creatures, which roused the enemy at the critical moment by pecking on the drum. Now, the wide-spread association of a bird with this species of holiday-begging, suggests the possibility that among the Greeks of Southern Italy, a chicken may have been sometimes adopted as its pretext, hence the name of Pulcinella as applied to the maskers in the performance. It is perhaps a somewhat far-fetched conjecture, but worth hazarding as a speculation, that the modern Italian idiom, *a macco*, signifying in great profusion, or superabundance, may have been derived from the plenteous gifts with which the classic Maccus was loaded on these occasions.

There is no doubt that we have in these rude dialogues, whether themselves of extreme antiquity or not, specimens of the most primitive form of drama, and that from some such simple germ all subsequent elaborations of theatrical art have been developed. In the *Farse Carnevivari* of Calabria, we find popular drama in a slightly higher stage of advancement, for in them there is a very imperfect attempt at distinction of character. The one we shall describe is played in the streets by a group of actors, Pulcinella, a king, his daughter, a duke, and soldiers. As they take up their position, the prologue, in Calabrian dialect, is recited by Pulcinella, while a guitar or barrel organ supplies the music, always a necessary part of these street shows.

Clear, clear a space—in this wide place,
Our merry group we will instal,
For mirth and joy without alloy,
We bring to glad the carnival.

Halt there, good folk, who love a joke,
Halt there at Pulcinella's call ;
Here armed I stand with wooden brand,
Who dares approach me, dead shall fall.

Here, here I be, armed cap-a-pie,
With pistol, bayonet, dirk and all,
And round my waist are pockets placed
Crammed full of cartridges and ball.

I'm Pulcinella, come from Scella,
Hear, hear and tremble, great and small ;
For on your city, without pity,
War's dreadful scourge will I let fall !

The delightful inconsistency of this address, opening with a promise of mirth and joy, and winding up with a declaration of war, will not fail to strike the reader, and is quite of a piece with what follows. The King opens the dialogue, reproaching Pulcinella in good round terms.

What means this braggart tone?
Vile miscreant, have done !
My daughter's love is won
By the Duke Saraon.

PULCINELLA.

With this good pistol I
Will make you basely fly
Full in the city's view.

KING.

And I with my good brand
Will run you through and through ;
Respect I should command
At least from such as you.

Ho, there, good friend ! arrest this ruffian, and carry him to the walls of the city.

SOLDIER.

Down, prostrate on the ground,
Or, by the holy deuce,*
I'll wait for no excuse,
But shoot you like a hound.

This will suffice as a specimen of the dialogue ; and in regard to the plot, its extremely unsatisfactory nature may be gathered from a brief sketch. Scarcely has Duke Saraon appeared on the scene and claimed the King's daughter as his bride, than the monarch, who had just ordered Pulcinella into irons, without any intermediate dialogue to explain his

* "Santo Diavolo," a Calabrian curse.

change of mind, proclaims him as his chosen son-in-law, desires his chains to be struck off, summons a notary, and, dispensing with all preliminaries, announces the most generous dispositions as to the young lady's fortune, and bestows her on Pulcinella on the spot.

This utter inconsequence in the action of the piece points to the conclusion that it is either a fragment of a more complete one, in which some attempt was made to furnish a probable motive for the conduct of the personages, or a distorted version of some older fable. Such as it is, it furnishes an illustration of the different working of popular taste in England and Italy in developing opposite ideals from the same original type.

The imaginative nature of the Italian peasant seeks a stimulus and outlet for poetic fancy, in themes remote from his own experience, while an English audience, in the lower classes at least, prefers to see on the stage a literal mimicry of its every-day life. The Calabrian Pulcinella, though himself a clown, is the successful rival of a Duke in wooing a King's daughter, and is left in a vague region of mythical triumph and bliss, while the British Punch is but a vulgar criminal of the commonest type, who beats his wife, kills his child, and cheats the hangman. It is only in the great cities in Italy that the influence of a similar realism asserts itself in popular drama, and that we see on the boards in Pulcinella and his congeners, the familiar figures of the streets and piazzas. Everywhere on the rustic stage the performance, however rude, aims at heroic dignity of subject, and the illusion, that owes nothing to external aids, is entirely supplied by the minds of the audience. Realism is a product of civilisation, and is perhaps a reaction from the tangible wonders with which it surrounds us ; while unsophisticated man in a ruder state of society takes refuge from the monotony of his actual existence by creating for himself that dream-world of the marvellous which only through the gate of fancy can he enter into.

E. M. CLERKE.

Pauline.*

(A DRAMATIC TALE. BY JULIAN HAWTHORNE.)

VI.

GOLD AND ROSES.

Pauline Gordoni had a pretty little house on Campden Hill, built in the new old style of red brick, with square bow windows, stained glass lattices and door-lights, fifteenth-century fireplaces, polished floors, and blue china. Her morning room, where she received early visitors and transacted business, was the freshest looking and most comfortable little retreat imaginable; there was always an odour of flowers in it; the chairs and lounges were low, soft, and luxurious: there was a piano, made to her order by Erard, of rosewood and ivory, and her monogram on the sounding-board. In the window hung a huge brass birdcage, containing two scarlet-crested cardinal birds, which sang as if in emulation of the prima donna herself. A magnificent English tom cat, of the largest size and most unexceptionable manners, likewise honoured this room with his presence, and seemed to concentrate and typify all the comfortableness of it within his own sleek-sided plumpness. It was a room where Hecate herself might have forgotten to be miserable.

Nevertheless, when the mistress of this enchanting abode made her appearance in it, on the morning after the events which have been narrated, her beautiful features wore an expression of anxiety and restlessness. She was dressed in a morning robe of a dull gold hue, which flowed in long lines from shoulder to hem, artfully revealing while it seemed to disguise the contours of her noble figure. It was softened at the throat and wrists with delicate lace; and small embroidered Turkish slippers peeped from beneath its pleated front. Pauline's hair was wound round the top of her head in a great dark coil, and was without any ornament other than its own rich lustre.

The prima donna sank down in a chair beside the table, stretched out first one white arm and then the other, and yawned with all the sincerity of solitude. After this, she sat for a while with her elbows on the arms of her chair, the tips of her fingers pressed against her temples, and her eyes roving on vacancy. At length she heaved a long sigh, sat erect, and, reaching across the table, touched a little silver bell.

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"Annette," she said sharply to the maid who appeared, "why have you not brought me my coffee and cigarettes?"

"Mademoiselle," answered Annette, with calm submission, "I am bringing them at this moment." And as she finished speaking, she set down the little tray with its contents by her mistress's side.

"How often must I tell you, Annette," said the prima donna severely, "that you are not to make the coffee until I give you the order? This coffee has been standing all the morning; it has been warmed over; it is not fit to drink! Take it away and make some fresh."

"Yes, mademoiselle," replied Annette, calmly taking up the tray again.

"Stop! Did I tell you to carry off the cigarettes as well? Bring the tray back. Good heavens, child! have you lost your head? or your heart, which? I can bear anything but stupidity. No, I will not have any fresh coffee made. I shall drink this, and if it makes me ill, it will be your fault. Has nothing come for me this morning? No letters—nothing?"

"Several things are waiting outside for mademoiselle."

"Do you wish to drive me mad because you see I have a headache? Go and get them without another word! Stop. What is there?"

"There is a square packet done up in white paper: it feels heavy—"

"Did I ask you how it felt? What else?"

"Then there are letters——"

"Annette," interposed the prima donna, with terrible severity, "be careful not to trifle with me any more. You see that I am not in a mood for it this morning. Do you know, child," she added, in glorious contralto tones, "that it is easier for me to kill you than to say that I will do so? and yet you dare to mention letters when you know that letters come every morning! What is there that has never come until now?"

"A bouquet, mademoiselle——"

"A bouquet: well: but now, take care! What sort of a bouquet? Is it made up on wires, of half-a-dozen different colours, and surrounded with a piece of glazed white paper with a lace border? Think before you speak, Annette!"

"Pardon, mademoiselle, but this bouquet is not in the least of that kind. There is no lace paper, and the colours are only two. The flowers are as if they had been plucked out of the garden without trimming; the stems are long and quite rough; one can see the leaves upon them. But, for the rest, there are a great many, and they smell very sweet."

"You are beginning to be sensible, Annette," observed Mademoiselle Gordoni, leaning forward with colour in her cheeks and a sparkle in her eye. "After all, perhaps I may have been a little harsh with you. But these flowers—of what kinds are they?"

"Of one kind only, mademoiselle; they are all roses."

"All roses," repeated Pauline softly: "and of two colours: and

gathered with untrimmed stems and leaves : and smelling very sweet. . . . Why, what is the matter, Annette ? are you crying ? ”

“ Oh no, mademoiselle,” said the young person : “ only,” she added, drying her eyes, “ mademoiselle said those words so—so beautifully—and—a little while before mademoiselle—was so stern ! ”

This spontaneous homage to the matchless music of her voice made the prima donna smile. “ You are a good child, Annette,” she said, “ and I will not be cross with you any more. There—go and bring me the flowers. Stop ! tell me first . . . how did they come here ? ”

“ A very strange old man brought them, mademoiselle. He had a very large grey beard, and his clothes were dark blue and not in the least in the mode. He spoke in a big hoarse voice like this—‘ Miss—them—flowers—is from——’ ”

Pauline put up her hand with a lovely smile. “ Hush—yes—you needn’t tell me whom he said they were from ; you imitate his voice so well that I even know what he said. Now run and get them this moment—quick ! ”

Annette ran accordingly, the ribbons of her cap fluttering behind her. She was not gone ten seconds ; nevertheless, when she returned, her mistress met her in the middle of the room and received the flowers in both her hands. The singer buried her face in them ; and when she raised it again, it was as rosy as the flowers themselves. She returned to her chair and re-seated herself with a luxurious sigh.

It was a great cluster of white and pink roses, over a foot broad, and so arranged that at a distance they had the appearance of a single gigantic flower, white at the circumference, and gradually growing pinker towards the centre, which was occupied by a solitary inimitable moss-rose. The whole sphere of flowers blushed and glowed like a fragrant living creature, fresh from nature’s nursery. Beautiful as they were, however, they symbolised to Pauline’s mind something rarer and more beautiful still.

“ You may leave me now, Annette,” she said. “ Take the tray with you ; and you may as well put those other things you mentioned down here, so that I may look at them when I am ready. If any one calls, be sure you let me know who it is before admitting him.”

When the prima donna was left alone, she behaved like a very idle young woman. All she did was to sit with the roses in her lap, touching their petals caressingly with her white finger-tips, examining each flower separately, smelling each of them ; laying her warm cheek against their cool softness ; until at last, grown bolder, she stooped down and touched the central rose with her lips. She raised her head with a low, shy laugh.

“ Not all the Ivo Scotts and Colonel Sparkses in the world shall keep us apart or interrupt us after to-day,” she thought. “ What a weary life that all seems, now ! Did I ever care for it ? What a stupid, disgusting creature I must have been ! ”

Still holding the bouquet in her left hand, she arose and went to the piano, where she struck a few happy chords, accompanying them with inarticulate tones, the pure expression of the emotion that does not lend itself to words. In the midst she paused, and said to herself, "Perhaps, before long, I shall be singing only to one man instead of to a thousand. Well, there will not be much difference. Did I not sing to him alone among the thousand last night? And is not he the greater audience of the two?"

With a light step she came back to her chair, and having deposited the bouquet securely on her knees, she proceeded to look over her letters. Three of them were from Ivo Scott, Colonel Sparks, and Sir Montagu Goldsborough respectively, each requesting an interview on that morning. She put them down with a rather mischievous smile.

The white paper packet next attracted her attention. It proved to contain a necklace and ear-rings of superb opals, with a card intimating that they were "A tiny tribute of admiration to Pauline Gordon from the Duke and Duchess of Marylebone, in recognition of her private virtues and public talents." "Kind old souls!" murmured the singer, "And what exquisite stones! But—bless their hearts!—what are stones compared with roses!"

A few minutes later Sir Montagu Goldsborough was announced and admitted.

The robust little baronet was redolent of courtliness and complacency, though underneath these dapper externals might have been discerned a comic but very sincere solemnity, due to the fact that he looked forward to taking a step of importance to himself, and therefore to society and the world at large. He had on hand, and proceeded to disembarass himself of, a number of sprightly and euphonious phrases relative to Pauline's personal charms and virtues, and to his own lively and appreciative recognition of them. From thence he launched forth into what he conceived to be topics of general interest or significance; and so by degrees he ambled confidently round to the point at which he had all along been consciously aiming.

"In short, my dear," he observed, drawing his chair nearer, and holding up for his fair interlocutor's contemplation a short and well-formed forefinger, as a sort of concrete nucleus of the valuable truths he was about to unfold, "what you require is an adviser—one whom you may trust with your name, your life, and er—er—your property."

"But, dear Sir Montagu," interposed Pauline, "I already possess that indispensable requisite."

The baronet was somewhat taken aback by this announcement. "Eh? dear me! You do? Pray, who may he be?" he inquired.

"Who?" repeated the lady with an arch expression: "Why, you silly man, yourself, of course! My property is in your bank, my name is on your books, and as for my life, I believe you would do anything with it—except take it."

"I apprehend," said Sir Montagu, after a pause, "that I have failed in rendering the full extent of my meaning entirely—er—intelligible to you."

"If you mean that I'm not half grateful enough to you, I dare say it's true," continued Pauline innocently; "but I know how good you are."

"My goodness, charming Gordoni, is only of value in my eyes in so far as it may incline you to entertain a proposal which I am now about to lay at your feet."

"I shall perhaps be better able to come to a decision upon it, dear Sir Montagu, if you would contrive to keep it upon the level of my understanding."

"Ha, ha! Capital! Very good, upon my word! But—shall we be serious for one moment? The offer which I bring you is—er—er—is that of a hand and heart!" The baronet rose as he spoke, and placed the former object over the place occupied by the latter.

Pauline leaned back in her chair with an air of disappointment; and it was in an aggrieved tone that she replied, "Really, Sir Montagu, there is nothing so very serious in that! I am accustomed to such offers almost daily. However, anything that you are sponsor for is entitled to my respectful consideration. Whose hand and heart are they?"

"Can you ask?" exclaimed the baronet, with an intensely explanatory smile. But Pauline remained obdurately unintelligent.

"Surely," she protested, "if a man wants to marry me, I may venture to ask his name."

"Pauline!" cried the baronet, driven to cast aside all circumlocution, and dropping, not without prejudice to his equilibrium and comfort, on one knee, "are you really unaware of the—hum!—the affection that—er—er—that I——"

She started to her feet with a motion so sudden as almost to upset her poor suitor, physically as well as mentally.

"You?" she exclaimed, in a tragic voice that thrilled him to his marrow. "Oh, Sir Montagu! for shame!" And then, to the utter completion of his discomfiture, she burst out in a hearty fit of laughter.

Sir Montagu struggled to his feet in silence. In fact, he was altogether bereft, for the moment, of both speech and reason.

"You must pardon my—ah—surprise," panted she, her enchanting eyes swimming with merriment. She held one hand to her side, while with the other she interposed her bouquet, as a sort of shield, between her amorous assailant and herself. "The truth is, dear Sir Montagu, I have always accustomed myself to look upon you rather as a father than as a—a——" Here she evinced a tendency to give way to unseemly mirth once more.

Sir Montagu gasped with returning life. Men of his make seldom find it possible to exist long in a state of separation from confidence in themselves.

"Ah—ahem! Yes," he stammered. "I appreciate the delicacy you

feel, Pauline. Your friendship with my daughter has led you—misled you, I might say—into——”

“Oh, not that alone——”

“Allow me to explain. I did not contemplate bringing home a bride while Gabrielle yet remained with me. But now that her destiny (as you have doubtless heard) leads her elsewhere——”

“Indeed, I haven’t!” broke in the lady. “On what blessed mortal does she smile?”

“On whom,” rejoined the baronet, with a dignified wave of the hand, “but her instructor and my protégé, Stephen Yorke?”

Pauline blanched for a moment, clutching her roses to her heart, and gazing at Sir Montagu with a dazed, dismayed look. Anon she fetched a deep breath, smiled feebly, and sank back into her chair. “You are joking,” she murmured.

“By no means!” protested the baronet, who had not perceived the singer’s emotion. “It was yesterday, at the studio, that Stephen——”

Pauline instantly sat erect, and extended her arm with an imperious gesture. “I was with Stephen yesterday in the studio, sir,” she cried.

“Er—certainly,” the blind gentleman assented. “It was, as I was about to state, a few minutes before you came in that——”

She leant back again with a short, relieved laugh. “Before! Ah—h! I knew it! . . . Pardon my curiosity—woman’s weakness, you know. What were we talking about?”

“About this proposal of mine,” replied Sir Montagu with alacrity. “Dearest Pauline, I firmly believe that you—hem! that neither of us could do better. Do not imagine me unmindful of the disparity of our ages. Listen!” he went on impressively. “For every year by which Pauline Gordoni is my junior, I have determined to settle five thousand pounds sterling on Pauline Goldsborough! Have I said enough?”

Pauline let her eye rest on her flowers, which she patted lovingly. “You make the gift too valuable, Sir Montagu,” she said quietly. “No, I cannot accept it. A few roses, without any settlement, is all I dare allow myself.”

“My charming friend! Would you have me take your words seriously?”

“Not too seriously to heart, I hope,” she answered kindly; “but seriously in earnest. I cannot marry you, Sir Montagu.”

“I cannot accept this decision as final,” exclaimed the baronet with some agitation. “Tell me one thing, Pauline—you are not engaged elsewhere?”

She partly concealed her face behind her bouquet as she answered demurely, “No.”

“Then I’ll not take ‘no’ for an answer!” the sturdy wooer rejoined. He rose and held out his hand. “For the present, I bid you adieu. Keep private what has passed between us, and meanwhile permit our relations to continue on the same friendly footing as before.”

"Oh, by all means," returned she indifferently.

"Adieu!" repeated Goldsborough; and turning at the door, he added, "Remember, I still hope!"

His departure left the prima donna relieved, indeed, but no longer so cheerful as before his advent. "Foolish old fellow, with his still hoping," she said to herself, half angrily. "Everybody hopes something, though, I suppose," she reflected; "and maybe my hopes are foolish, too! Ah well, I will be foolish, then. How can I be wise since my heart is gone?"

VII.

SPARRING.

How long Pauline's solitude continued she did not know. It was broken at last by the intimation from Annette that the Honourable Ivo Scott was waiting for an audience.

His arrival at this time annoyed Pauline, inasmuch as she had excellent reason to expect the speedy appearance of someone else. She directed that he should be shown in, however, inwardly resolving to dismiss him at the earliest opportunity.

"Illustrissima! the top of the morning to you," he said, with his easy smile. "You are as lovely as that aria you sang last night. Stephen's bouquet evidently!" he added to himself. "She's in love, no doubt; but with the passion, I fancy, not the man. Diva," he resumed aloud, "I'll not detain you long." He seated himself slowly, in obedience to a motion of her hand, and regarded her for a few moments attentively.

"Well," she said at length, with a movement of impatience: "I am waiting to . . . be detained!"

Scott bowed, and dropped his eyes. "You won't think me intrusive if I remind you of our long acquaintance—of the great interest I——"

"My dear Mr. Scott," interrupted Pauline with a slightly sarcastic intonation, "I'm in no danger of forgetting that your influence first introduced me to the London public."

"I refer to no such slight service, illustrissima. . . . You know my sincere affection for Stephen?"

Pauline half-closed her eyelids for a moment. "You have told me of it," she said coldly.

"Well—I am going to risk your friendship and his by doing you both the greatest service in my power."

"Really? That sounds suspiciously——" She paused.

"Suspiciously what?"

"Philanthropic!"

Ivo laughed somewhat laboriously. "I'll try to be only diplomatic, then," he said. "But, to be frank, my mission is one of extreme delicacy, and——"

"Mr. Scott," said Pauline, with an access of imperiousness, "to the point at once!"

"Be it so. Stephen fancies he loves you. He told me as much."

"Was he so much in need of a confidant?"

Ivo passed over the sneer and continued. "I pointed out to him his folly." She started and frowned. "Hear me to the end," he said. "I reminded him that Gabrielle had been taught to regard him as her future husband: that on all accounts the match would be a desirable one: that you and he, on the contrary, had but temporarily dazzled one another."

"There is no need, that I can see, to spin this matter out," interrupted Pauline again, with ominous composure. "It lies in a nutshell. You assert that Mr. Yorke and I don't know our own minds, whereas you are intimately acquainted with both. I might remind you that, although you appear to have gained his confidence, I'm not aware of having yet given you mine. But no matter about that. What I am dying with curiosity to know is, your motive for making the assumptions and taking the liberties you have done. You have yourself, you know, been regarded as Gabrielle's suitor. Now, are you surrendering her to your rival because she loves him better than she does you? or because he can make her happier than you could? or what is the answer to your conundrum, Mr. Scott?"

Ivo met this attack with an aspect of sad and dignified rebuke. "Pauline, I have never aspired to the honour of Miss Goldsborough's hand. You are hardly just. My sole object has been the welfare of my two dearest friends."

"Well, you have surprised me, I must confess," said she, with one of her unexpected but always melodious laughs. "Now it is my turn! Just before you came in I had received an offer . . . a fortune larger than I could hope to make myself . . . with a hand and heart thrown in! What do you think of that?"

Scott felt that he was turning pale; but he could not help it; it taxed all his powers to maintain his facial immobility. "Goldsborough, by all that's monstrous!" he groaned inwardly. "There's a feminine revenge! Since she can't make Stephen happy as his wife, to make him miserable as his mother-in-law! She's capable of it, too!"

"On the other hand," Pauline went on, taking a letter from the table, "here is the American impresario proposing liberal terms for a tour in the United States. Now, I ask you as a friend, which of these two offers ought I to accept?"

"The American, by all means!" exclaimed Ivo, with less than his usual forethought.

"You surprise me again," said Pauline, leaning forward with an air of malicious interest. "Would not my marriage with another leave Stephen as free for Gabrielle as if I went to America unmarried? Is an ocean between us indispensable to his serenity?"

"It's indispensable to mine at all events!" muttered the diplomatist, half aloud. "Pauline, I won't attempt to disguise it from you—it is not on Stephen's account only that I counsel you to go to America. I have a—a more personal interest in it than that."

At this critical moment Pauline rose from her chair and laid her finger to her lips.

"Hark!" she said; "I think someone is coming." She touched the bell. "Annette," she continued, as the maid appeared, "whoever that is that has just arrived, let him come in!" And having administered this crushing blow, she smiled innocently upon the Honourable Ivo Scott, and quietly resumed her seat at the table.

It was Colonel Sparks who had been selected by destiny to interrupt the diplomatist's avowal. He entered with the grave self-possession of an eighteenth-century French marquis, and made the prima donna an obeisance so profound as to inform her that his hair was parted behind as well as down the middle.

"Good morning, mademoiselle," he said. "I dropped in to ratify our little affair. Ah! the Honourable Mr. Scott, I believe. It gives me pleasure, sir, as the representative of American journalism in the old country, to congratulate you on your recent appointment to Washington. Allow me to take you by the hand."

The First Secretary responded politely. Though staggered by Pauline's rebuff, he was not defeated, feeling as he did that he still had the best of the game in his hands; and he had immediately reflected that the Colonel's cause was, so far as it went, his own also.

Colonel Sparks now seated himself at the other side of the table, and produced a large memorandum-book. "You received my letter this morning, mademoiselle?" he inquired, glancing across. She bowed.

"Well, you see it amounts to about this. My folks in New York, who are running the Great Opera and Concert Combination Troupe through the States this fall and winter, have authorised me, as their agent here, to engage the biggest prima donna on earth for the leading rôles. Need I add, mademoiselle, that you are the lady we are after?"

"This is most flattering," returned the Gordoni graciously. "But bigness be a stipulation, Colonel Sparks, there is in London a prima donna even bigger than I, who——"

"I expect you refer to Frangipani," returned the Colonel, allowing himself a smile. "Well, she would have the call of you if pounds avoirdupois were in question, and no mistake. But no, mademoiselle; we don't look at her, or anyone else, if we can get you."

Gordoni appeared to consider for a moment, and then, to Ivo's secret astonishment, she said, "I have only one question to ask—what are your terms?"

"I like that!" exclaimed the Colonel, rubbing his hands and nodding his head sideways at Ivo. "Eh, Mr. Scott? I like a lady who can talk money! Our terms, mademoiselle, are as follows:—For one

hundred appearances in opera and concert, one hundred thousand dollars. That is twenty thousand pounds British money. In addition, you receive full travelling expenses for self and maid; and a draft for two thousand pounds down on account. Does that seem about right?"

"What does the Secretary of Legation think of it?" she inquired, glancing at him languidly.

"His most avaricious dreams would be content with a fifth as much," answered Ivo, crossing his legs and wondering what was coming next.

The Colonel permitted himself another smile. "We First Secretaries and New York correspondents aren't so scarce, Mr. Scott," he remarked; "and we don't draw."

"Except on our imaginations," the diplomatist murmured.

"Well, now, mademoiselle," continued the Colonel, unfolding a large document and spreading it out on the table, "if you will kindly sign this agreement, and endorse this draft, I'll be off and get your ticket for New York. There's no time to lose, if I may be allowed to say so."

"Lose none on my account, Colonel Sparks," replied Pauline, bending over her flowers for a moment, and then looking up at him quietly. "I shall not go to New York."

The Colonel's face wrinkled incredulously. "Refuse our offer!"

Ivo had risen and passed behind Pauline's chair. "For Heaven's sake think what you are doing!" he exclaimed in a low but earnest tone. Her only answer was to rise from the table and stand as if in intimation that the audience was over. Ivo bit his moustache. "If I told her of that scrape of her brother," he thought, "she'd sign at once. . . . No, hang it! I must try to spare her that."

"The fact is, Colonel Sparks," said Pauline coolly, "your offer is liberal, but it does not tempt me to leave England. Madame Frangipani——"

The Colonel shook his head despondently. "Frangipani be . . . I'll tell you what, mademoiselle," he exclaimed, getting to his feet and buttoning his coat resolutely. "I'll step round to the telegraph office and wire to my folks at New York to raise the terms. We'll have you, if it costs a million."

"It will be of no use, I warn you," returned Pauline; and now the colour began to deepen in her cheeks, and her eyes to sparkle. She had been baited long enough.

"Make no final decision, I entreat you!" said Ivo at her ear. "I have other arguments——"

She turned upon him haughtily, measuring him with her eyes. "Mr Scott," said she, "I will not be argued with."

The Colonel touched Ivo on the elbow. "When you see a prima donna in that humour, sir," he whispered confidentially, "you may make up your mind that cash down is worth all the arguments in the world. I mean what I say, sir; and in less than half-an-hour I expect to give

you a proof of it." So saying, the gallant gentleman bowed, and went away hastily. He ran into another gentleman who was just coming in : a tall, broad-shouldered personage, with large, deep-set eyes, and firm but generous lips. "Who may he be, I'd like to know?" questioned the Colonel to himself, as he ran downstairs; and being a practical person, he repeated the question to the servant who let him out of the door.

"Stephen Yorke, eh? Now, what can he be after?" meditated the American, as he whirled along to the telegraph office in a hansom.

VIII.

A HIT.

Scott had moved to one side when Yorke entered, so that the latter did not at first see him. He came up to Pauline, and grasped her hands with heartiness. The roses, which she had hitherto clung to through all vicissitudes, now slid unheeded to the floor.

"You look pale," he said tenderly.

"Mr. Scott, you are not going?" she inquired with polite significance.

Yorke relinquished her hands and turned. "Ivo, I didn't see you."

"How d'ye, old boy," returned the diplomatist. "Yes, *diva*, my mare's waiting; but I shall step in again on my way back from the office; and, of course, we shall meet at Goldsborough's garden-party this afternoon. So, *au revoir*! This will be a dangerous interview," he thought, "but, hang it! they can't marry."

"So you got my roses," said Yorke, picking them up with a smile.

"Oh, my poor flowers!" she exclaimed nervously, holding out her hands for them. "I have been wondering," she added, after some hesitation, "what you could have to say to me since yesterday. Anything about the portrait?"

"The portrait doesn't satisfy me. It's a picture of your features, but it isn't you. But since my glimpse of you at the theatre last night, I have more than ever realised that my life is a very imperfect affair."

"Imperfect?"

"Because it's a solitary life."

"But you are to remedy that soon, you know," said Pauline with increasing nervousness. "Sir Montagu was here this morning and told me——"

"Well? What did Sir Montagu tell you?" demanded Stephen, smiling.

"He hinted at your engagement to Gabrielle."

"What?" cried Stephen, with a voice like an organ.

"So now we must exchange congratulations," she went on hurriedly, "for you are to congratulate me, too."

"What?" repeated Stephen, dropping his voice to the key of bewilderment.

"On the eligible offer of marriage I received just now," she continued in a tone that wavered on the border between laughter and tears. It was delicious to her to see the consternation into which her words were plunging Stephen, while at the same time her heart reproached her for causing him needless pain. Yet she felt impelled to struggle against his love, if only to assure herself for ever of its overmastering strength.

"Who offered you marriage?" he demanded, after looking intently at her.

"I promised not to tell; but no matter, for I had to tell that person that I was already engaged to someone else."

"I don't understand," said Stephen simply, leaning back in his chair.

"You know—to go to America."

"Oh, is that all? Well, you are not going to America," said Stephen, feeling immensely relieved.

"Indeed, it's all arranged; there are the papers on the table: the agreement only wants my signature."

"Well, it will never have it," rejoined he, with rising good-humour.

"Why not? I shall make a fortune in six months."

Stephen drew his chair round to hers, and leaned over towards her.

"When I gathered these roses this morning," said he, touching the flowers with his hand, "I was thinking of what we were saying to each other yesterday. It was not in this humour, Pauline, that you parted from me last night."

"I must forget yesterday, and so must you," she answered, beginning to breathe faster. She glanced at him, and then, feeling the certainty that her words would be in vain, she spoke more boldly. "It was only a dream that we had . . . a sort of fool's paradise that never was meant to be realised. We must not think about it any more. Obligations and honour stand in the way."

"Obligations and honour!" he repeated with some scorn. "What sort of new language are you talking? Those are not your words, nor your thoughts. My only obligations are to you; my honour is yours—and my love——"

"No, Stephen . . . you must not say——"

"I say," he exclaimed, kindling, "that my love is yours; no other woman has ever had or ever will have it. My darling, I love you! Be my wife."

Pauline felt that it would be impossible for her to hold out much longer. To do so at all was to keep heaven at a distance for the sheer luxury of imagination. To yield would be sweet; but in her heart she had already yielded, and to be wooed like this was sweetness superadded.

"I am afraid, Stephen," she said in a very mild tone, "that if you had never met me you would have married Gabrielle."

"If I had not met you I never should have married at all," he answered with profound conviction.

"But, Stephen . . . don't you think you may be mistaking infatuation for love? When I am far away in America you will forget me."

"I will not answer you—you are not speaking from your heart!" he said almost indignantly. "Be yourself, Pauline; I am too much"—his voice trembled—"in earnest to bear anything else. I am not a love-sick boy—I am a man, and I love you with all the strength of a man. I can do nothing . . . my life would fail without you. If you love me, you will consecrate and ennoble it. Come to me!"

Pauline stood up, tearful, smiling, tremulous, brimming over with love and beauty. Stephen rose also, but with a vague alarm in his heart. She was so intensely desirable to him as to make it seem always possible that he might lose her.

"Stephen," she said, in a voice all uneven and vibrating, but with a dance of happiness underneath, "there is one thing I want to tell you that I have not told you. I don't think you have ever suspected it."

"Well?" was all he could say.

"Well, then . . . but promise me that you will believe this, Stephen—that you will never doubt it for a moment!"

"Yes, I promise."

"It is only that—Stephen Yorke—I love you ten . . . hundred . . . thousand times more than you can possibly love me!"

Stephen gave a sort of low shout as he caught the lovely woman in his arms. Now she was laughing and sobbing on his shoulder; it all seemed too deliriously blissful to be true. Was it true? Poor Stephen! There was something else true that would speedily make this truth appear like the saddest of all pain.

While the lovers had thus been arranging their affairs according to the impulses of their own loving hearts, Colonel Sparks and the Honourable Ivo Scott were both on their way—the former from the telegraph office, the latter from Whitehall—to the little red-brick house on Campden Hill. Both had important matters on their minds. The Colonel was the first to arrive. His outward gravity of demeanour was even more marked than usual; but this was because it was a gravity conditioned upon inward exultation. His telegraphic correspondence had had a satisfactory issue; and he was enjoying, at one and the same time, the patriotic or professional gratification of success in his mission, and the more private and personal, but not less natural complacency consequent upon the imaginary handling of a handsome "commission." All this, to a man of the world like the Colonel, was sufficient to justify his assumption of the countenance of a prosperous undertaker. Concerning Gordoni's assent to his revised proposals he entertained, of course, not the shadow of a doubt.

"I have communicated with my folks on the other side, mademoi-

selle," he said, "and they have wired back an answer which I expect you will find satisfactory." He unfolded the telegram and read as follows. "'Tell Gordoni we see that twenty thousand pounds and go ten thousand pounds better.' Shall we take it that that settles the bargain, ma'am?"

"I am really very sorry that you have taken all this trouble, Colonel Sparks," said Pauline, blushing and smiling. In fact, so charitably disposed towards all the world had her new-found happiness made her, that if she could have made the American tour consistent with staying at home and being married to Stephen, she would have signed the agreement on the spot. As this seemed not feasible, however, she was constrained to add: "I'm afraid I must say 'no' again, after all. But I am sure Madame Frangipani will suit you a good deal better."

The Colonel's jaw relaxed. "How?" he exclaimed falteringly, "Do I understand you to say that you go back on thirty thousand pounds, first-class travelling expenses for self and maid, and—well—say five thousand pounds down?" He might have added a lament on the subject of his lost commission, had he not been too high-toned a gentleman to betray that sort of solicitude.

"Mademoiselle Gordoni's refusal is final, sir," interposed Yorke, stepping between the Colonel and his quarry. At this juncture Ivo appeared in the doorway.

"I'll tell you what, mademoiselle," exclaimed the Colonel, playing his last card, "make it ten thousand down, and say no more about it!"

"Ah, Colonel, still true to your logic, I see," remarked Ivo, sauntering forward. But his eyes went past the discomfited agent, and rested searchingly on Pauline. Meanwhile Stephen took the American by the arm and drew him aside to the window. "I'll give you valid reasons for this lady's decision," said he.

Ivo approached Pauline. "What have you done?" he asked gravely.

"I have given myself to Stephen!" she answered, with a noble gesture of the head and hands.

"All my persuasions were useless?"

"I love him!" said she, as if nothing could prevail against that argument.

"And yet you will never marry him," rejoined Ivo, in a low determined voice.

Pauline gazed at him a moment in astonishment, and then gave a little defiant laugh. But the strange expression of Ivo's face presently had its effect upon her. Her laugh died away. "Will you tell me what you mean?" she demanded sharply. "What is the matter?"

"It's an ungracious task to fulfil," he said, looking away and pulling off his glove. "But you have left me no choice; it must be done, and there's no one but me to do it, Pauline." He faced her doggedly. "You know that miserable secret that oppresses Stephen?"

"He told me about it yesterday. What—is that all?"

Ivo shook his head. "No, no," he said sadly; "I am coming to it. Stephen's earnest wish is to stand face to face with the man who betrayed his sister. . . . Stephen will kill that man."

"Why do you speak of these unhappy things?" she broke out in sudden passionate resentment. "What have they to do with my happiness?"

"I found the man yesterday," said Ivo sternly. "Hush! Stephen must not know," he added, laying his hand upon her arm, as she glanced instinctively towards her lover. He whispered the remaining words in her ear: "The betrayer of Stephen's sister is Percy Gordon, your——"

She turned quickly pale. "It is false!" she said faintly; and she appealed to him piteously, "Say it is false, too! Heaven would not permit it."

"Hush! Control yourself!" muttered he. "I tell you the truth."

"Then he must remedy the wrong—he shall marry her!" she said, with a wild look.

"He is about to marry another woman."

"Oh, I cannot bear it," she said with a helpless moan.

"Why, Pauline, what has happened?" exclaimed Stephen, who had just finished his explanations with the Colonel. He came up to her like a lion, and put his arm round her waist. "My dear. . . . My darling! Tell me!"

She turned her face towards him for a moment with a yearning look and a smile, and a loving inarticulate murmur. Then slowly her features assumed a hard, expressionless aspect. She freed herself from his embrace by a strengthless but resolute effort. Standing alone, she stared this way and that in a dazed way, as if she were suddenly awakened from a deep sleep. But presently she summoned all her energies and moved to the table.

"Colonel Sparks," she said, in a flat, sluggish voice, "the agreement . . . the agreement—I wish to sign it."

"Pauline, my love," said Stephen with tender anxiety, "you are ill—you don't know what you are doing. I'll call your maid, and send these others away."

"You are all wrong . . . let me alone!" she answered with a shudder. "I have changed my mind—I cannot marry you." Her hand groped over the table and found a pen. "Colonel Sparks—gentlemen," she continued, looking up vacantly, "you are witnesses that I sign this agreement to go to America." She bent down and wrote her name at the bottom of the paper. Having done so, she rose to her full height and flung out her arms.

"You are witnesses——" she repeated. Darkness came before her eyes: she tried to reach a chair, but faintness overcame her: Stephen caught her as she dropped backwards.

Colonel Sparks, after carefully drying the signature, folded up the agreement and put it solemnly in his pocket. Then he looked at the unconscious prima donna and sighed.

"I understand women considerably well, Mr. Scott," he remarked to that gentleman, buttoning up his coat and taking his hat in his hand. "They are all more or less one thing. I thought I had lost this one: I almost wish I had! but it was not to be, sir. No, it's just as I told you—cash wins every time! Good morning."

IX.

TWO WOMEN.

Sir Montagu Goldsborough's villa at Putney was a capital place for a garden party: the grounds abutted on the river, and in addition to the well-kept lawns and winding paths common to English gardens, they contained a fine growth of old trees. The house itself was of composite architecture, but roomy and picturesque, especially where, on the garden side, the improvements which the baronet had introduced could not be seen. The back drawing-room windows opened on a wide stone balcony, heavily draped with climbing roses and other leafy vines, and from which a flight of stone steps with high carved balustrade descended to the lawn. On this balcony, at about four o'clock in the afternoon, Gabrielle, in a pretty summer costume, was plucking flowers and making them up into a little nosegay. The expected guests had not yet begun to arrive. She was in a thoughtful mood, and occasionally she paused in her occupation and lapsed into reverie.

"My dear," said the voice of Sir Montagu from within, "my dear! Where are you? I wish to speak with you."

"Here I am, papa," she answered, not turning her head.

"Ah!" said the baronet, emerging through the window in all the splendour of a black broadcloth morning coat, grey gloves and trousers, and a large white flower in his button-hole. "Ah! there you are. Since speaking with you I have called to mind one or two minor items. You are aware that the Marquis of Paddington has kindly promised to be present this afternoon, and I wish you to make Grigson understand that when he arrives his name must be announced with—er—emphasis."

Gabrielle arched her eyebrows. "Certainly, papa," she answered demurely, "with an emphasis on the 'marquis,' I understand."

"And—er—as this happens to be his lordship's first visit, you will, of course, see that his lordship is introduced only to the right people. Ivo Scott his lordship knows, and Stephen Yorke also. Gordoni is coming, of course?"

"I suppose so—she has accepted."

"And, my dear, I desire you to be especially civil to—er—er—to the American officer. His pen may be of infinite use to me in financial operations."

"Am I to introduce him to the marquis?"

"That is perhaps not altogether necessary. You may, however,

apprise him of the fact that his lordship is present ; and contrive that he sees the pictures and—er—er—the service of plate in the dining-room, and all that sort of thing.”

“Make your mind easy, papa,” said Gabrielle, with her ironic little smile. “I will put your best foot forward for you in everything. Meanwhile I think you had better be in the front of the house, in case anyone should arrive.”

“There goes the bell, now!” the baronet exclaimed, shooting down his wristbands and giving a glance at his boots. “Possibly it may be Gordoni. Be on the alert, my dear, be on the alert!” And with that injunction he bustled off.

“I wonder, now,” said the young lady to herself, “whether my beloved parent has not been offering himself to Gordoni this morning? He certainly seemed rather preoccupied at lunch. Can she have accepted him? Or, rather, can she have refused him? And if so, for whom? I must find out, and quickly too.—Oh, Mr. Scott!”

“A nineteenth-century Juliet!” exclaimed the diplomatist gallantly. He had strolled round the corner of the house, intending, perhaps, to have a cigarette and a few minutes to himself. “What a jolly old balcony! and what a lovely bouquet. Ah me! I know I am unfashionably early, but my stay in old England is so short that I must make the most of what is left.”

“Is it true, then, that you are going away?” the young lady inquired pensively.

“Yes, fair lady. I have got the Washington appointment at last.”

“Oh dear! Then you are going for good?”

“For good? Well, in the hope of bettering myself, at all events.”

“And when do you come back?”

“At Her Majesty’s pleasure!”

“Oh! I thought only lunatics were detained ‘at Her Majesty’s pleasure!’”

Ivo laughed. Then he became graver. “Perhaps I am a madman to go!” he muttered.

“Then—don’t!” said Gabrielle, glancing in his eyes for a moment. Before he could answer, she went on, “Have you seen Gordoni this morning?”

“Gordoni? Ye—es,” replied the diplomatist, as if the matter had nearly escaped his recollection. “Sir Montagu was there too, I fancy.”

Gabrielle was silent for a few moments. At length she said in a nonchalant tone, “By the way, do you know whether Gordoni has really taken that American engagement?”

“Colonel Sparks assures me that she has: and as he showed me her signature to the agreement, I suppose he is right.”

“She could not have accepted a better engagement, I’m sure,” observed Gabrielle charitably. “All her friends must be glad—except, perhaps, Mr. Yorke!”

"And pray what should prevent Mr. Yorke from being glad too?" demanded Ivo with a curious look.

"You know very well that he wants to marry her."

"You ought to have the best of reasons for knowing that Stephen will do no such thing," returned Ivo deliberately. "For my part, I had expected, before leaving England, to congratulate him—and you—on having made a much better match!"

"Then, if I were Her Majesty, I would certainly not entrust you with a diplomatic post on the other side of the Atlantic!" She came down the steps as she spoke, with the little nosegay between her fingers. On the step above that on which Ivo was standing, she stopped, looking with arch gravity in his face.

"And why would you be so unkind as that?" he inquired, with a feeling that Sir Montagu Goldsborough's daughter was a very pretty and clever girl.

"I should not be unkind," rejoined she, slipping the flowers through Ivo's button-hole, "but I should know that, since you can neither see nor comprehend what is directly before your own eyes, here in England, you could not be a safe person to be sent abroad. I should keep you strictly under supervision: so you see you may be very glad that I am not Her Majesty, but only . . . me!"

"But Miss Goldsborough—Gabrielle!" exclaimed Ivo as she turned and ran up the steps again. She turned with a smile and shake of the head at the window, and then vanished through it. Ivo, left alone, looked down at his button-hole, looked up at the vacant balcony, thrust his hands into his pockets, and turning sharply on his heel, sauntered over to a garden seat beneath a neighbouring tree, where he seated himself and lit a cigarette. "By Jove!" he said, half aloud, several times. Beyond a doubt, Gabrielle was a very pretty, clever, sympathetic little lady. How much so, he had never fully realised until now.

By-and-by Yorke appeared on the balcony, and on seeing Ivo he immediately came down the steps and walked up to him. The expression he wore was not reassuring. "Ivo, I want a word with you," he said, sitting down on the other end of the seat.

"My dear Stephen," returned the diplomatist calmly, "I make it a rule never to have words with a friend. Will you try a cigarette?"

"Let us be sure we are friends, in the first place," Stephen retorted, rejecting the proffered peace-offering with a gesture.

"Oh, nonsense, Stephen! I can understand that you are ruffled—bitterly disappointed if you like: but why should you quarrel with me?"

"I don't pick quarrels: but you owe me an explanation, and I mean to have it!" replied Yorke, with a good deal of emphasis. "Pauline Gordon promised this morning to be my wife. Ten minutes afterwards, after a few words from you, she broke her word to me. Explain that!"

"My dear Stephen, I have been against a marriage between you

and Pauline from the first. My reasons are known to you: well, I made them known to her."

"There is something behind this. It was in the teeth of your sophistries that I won Pauline this morning."

"But since then, as she herself told you, she has changed her mind."

"I ask you to explain that change."

"Confound it, you ask an impossibility!" exclaimed Ivo with a show of impatience. "Who can explain a woman? Colonel Sparks thinks he can! I know I cannot! But just look at the matter coolly. Here is a great prima donna—who may have had any number of previous love-affairs—meets the great painter Stephen Yorke. Jaded with the world's flattery, she finds in you a deep heart and a sincere mind: it's a new sensation to her, and she at once mistakes it for love: for to be in love is the proper condition of all genuine women. You respond. She at last perceives she has gone too far, yet is loth to prove herself a flirt: and only at the final moment does she muster resolution enough to—to do what she has done."

Stephen listened with bent brows: but when Ivo had concluded, he shook his head. "You are not saying what you believe," he declared bluntly. "Pauline Gordoni is as honest as daylight. Come, speak out! we are man to man!"

In making this latter assertion, Stephen was in so far mistaken that the words were overheard by other ears besides those of his immediate interlocutor. Gordoni herself had just come out upon the balcony. She remained motionless at the head of the steps, partly overshadowed by the woodbine sprays, yet not so much so but that the two men might have seen her had they turned their eyes in that direction. But they were too busy for that.

"Has it ever occurred to you that you are surprisingly selfish?" was Ivo's answer to Stephen's appeal.

"In what respect selfish?"

"In that you have no eyes for anybody's sensibilities but your own. For instance, I have known Pauline almost as many years as you have months; did it never dawn upon your mind that she may have fascinated me as well as you?"

At this attack Stephen blanched visibly. Strange as it may appear, the contingency to which Ivo drew his attention was utterly novel to him. He had never imagined his diplomatic friend even capable of loving any woman; he had seemed too courteous and self-possessed for that. Herein, therefore, Stephen's sense of justice pronounced himself remiss; but it did not blind him to the fact of a certain crookedness in Ivo's behaviour. "If you loved Pauline," he said after a pause, "you should have let me know it at the time I gave my confidence to you. Instead of that, you hid it from me, in order, as it seems, to get me at advantage. That's not my notion of friendship, or even fairness."

"Not too fast, Stephen; you are unreasonable. I was not called

upon to confide my secrets to any one : but I could hardly have spoken more plainly on the matter than I did to you." It was to Ivo's credit that, feeling he had the shady side of the argument, he nevertheless kept his temper.

"I was not enough of a diplomatist to understand you," Stephen replied, with a kind of gloomy sarcasm. "But let that pass. I suppose you are not going to tell me that Pauline has—has encouraged your addresses?"

This nettled Ivo somewhat. "She has not accepted me," was his answer; "but she has done what might be considered a first step in that direction—she has rejected you!"

Stephen got up. "I have given you a chance to explain yourself," he observed, "and you have only beaten about the bush. If you have acted according to your ideas of right, they are different from mine. But Pauline can tell the truth; and I shall go from you to her. If she is here, I will see her before I go."

"Go, then, and my blessing accompany you!" exclaimed Ivo, giving way at last to his irritation. "I give it up! Goodness knows, what I have done has been a great deal more for Pauline's sake than for my own—as you may be sorry to acknowledge some day. I am a better friend to you than you deserve, and, as a final proof of it, I advise you to go home as fast as you can, pack your traps, and start for South Africa. If you force an interview on Pauline, you will be doing more mischief than you can remedy."

"I will see her," returned Stephen doggedly, "whatever happens."

Meanwhile, Pauline had plenty of time to reflect upon the course she would pursue; and she entered upon it without further delay. As Stephen turned to ascend the steps, he beheld her within a few yards of him, and advancing with a countenance which was pale, indeed, but bore signs neither of flurry nor anxiety. "Hallo!" muttered Ivo, rising to his feet, "here's a scene! I wonder what on earth she's going to do now."

"Good afternoon, gentlemen," said Pauline, who was dressed from head to foot in white, and carried a parasol upside down by a carved ivory handle. "Am I interrupting a private conversation?"

"Far from it; it is to you I wished to speak," answered Stephen, regarding her with a gaze that sought to read her thoughts. But she had thrown herself with her whole heart into her part, and was determined that her thoughts should not be read.

"Is it about anything in particular? If neither of you are going to offer me a seat, I shall take it without asking," she added, suiting the action to the word, and opening her parasol. "I feel awfully tired. Mr. Yorke—or you, Mr. Scott, if you will be so good—just step inside and bring me a glass of lemonade." When he was gone she turned to Stephen with an engaging smile. "Now, Mr. Yorke, if you can find room here beside me, we can chat at our leisure. We ought to be quite

sentimental, for this is our last meeting. To-morrow I'm off—five thousand down, as the Colonel says, and first-class travelling expenses for self and maid!" She finished with a laugh, so naturally done as to make Stephen's blood run cold.

"I want you to tell me the truth about what has happened," he said at length.

"The truth? You are becoming dull already! The truth is not sentimental. At least, what is sentimental is not often true."

"Are you the same woman you were this morning?"

"In some respects—as far as flesh and bones go—I am pretty much the same, I believe. In some other respects, perhaps not. Why?"

"I mean in your love for me, Pauline."

"Now, Mr. Yorke!" she said archly; "are you in earnest, or are you paying me a compliment?"

"I don't know what you mean by paying you a compliment."

"Mercy on us! what is the matter with the man? If you are going to be cross, I wish you would go out and talk to somebody else. I want to enjoy my last day in England. I only thought you might be complimenting my histrionic capabilities. As I am technically a lyrical artist, any such recognition would be especially welcome."

"You are acting now, Pauline," said Yorke, with a deep impetuosity that shook his voice, "but you can never make me believe that you were acting this morning. God never made a woman so exquisitely false as that. What is this hateful thing that masks you from me?" He held out his hands, in which the tremor of his passion was perceptible, and added in a low tone of ineffable tenderness, "Come . . . come back to me!"

Pauline's lips felt dry, and a sickness crept over her heart that made life itself almost intolerable. Her courage, however, still held out, and not many seconds had passed before she was able to answer. "Really, Mr. Yorke, you make my position very embarrassing. I took you to be a man of the world. I certainly never expected that a little harmless flirtation over a portrait would subject me to being hauled over the coals like this. If you were resolved upon taking things seriously, you should have withdrawn in time. I can't be expected to look out for the welfare of all the people who make love to me! I belong to the stage—I have never pretended to be better than any other stage woman. I must have excitement. . . . I dare say I have my share of vanity. I will be perfectly frank with you; I confess that I felt an especial ambition to bring you to my feet. They said no woman had ever moved you; I made up my mind to do what no other woman had done. And if you must have it . . . I confess also that I came to take such an interest in the comedy as almost to persuade myself it was not make-believe. Yes—I was really rather upset this morning—if that is any consolation to you. So now . . . shall we cry quits, and shake hands upon it?"

"God forgive us, if this is true!" murmured Stephen, in a low, awestruck voice. "But it cannot be true!" he continued after a moment, with the intense energy of a man at grips with spiritual death. "Pauline—darling! I love you, I believe in you, I trust you as I trust Heaven! Keep your secret, if you will; but let me keep you!"

"This must end!" cried Pauline, starting to her feet in a state little removed from delirium. "Are you a man? have you no pride? I tell you I cannot—I will not! Leave me! You insult me . . . You trouble me . . . you tire me."

Stephen stood aghast. He had fought against this evil belief as one fights for all that he deems pure and sacred; but it was getting too strong for him. He and Pauline, facing one another, formed a strange and tragic spectacle. Ivo Scott, coming slowly down the steps, eyed them curiously and rather uneasily. Stephen was the first to become aware of his presence.

"Ivo," he said in a husky voice, "you told me just now that you were this woman's suitor. Is it true or false? There she stands."

"I must decline to answer," replied Ivo, after a little.

Then Pauline took a sudden and desperate resolution. She came forward and took her place beside the diplomatist. "Mr. Yorke," she said feebly, "your unmanly resistance forces me to do what may seem unwomanly. Mr. Scott has been my friend for many years; he wishes me to become his wife." She hesitated and faltered, but presently steeled herself again. "I accept . . . I agree . . . I will be his wife. Is that enough?"

Stephen's lips moved, but no audible words came. He turned round and walked away.

X.

ENGAGED.

The Honourable Ivo Scott had never felt so thoroughly embarrassed as at that moment, when all for which he had been scheming was put suddenly within his grasp. Pauline, as soon as Yorke was out of sight, moved unsteadily back to the seat, and sank down upon it. She seemed quite to have forgotten that the man to whom she had given herself was in existence.

"Was ever woman in such humour won!" he thought to himself, looking at her askance. "By Jove! what an appalling sort of courtship! Humph! she's not the ideal picture of betrothed affection just at present. I suppose one ought to say something. 'Pon my word, I never felt less disposed for conversation. The sensible way would be to let her alone; but that's hardly consistent with the privileges of an accepted lover! I must thank her, at all risks. Pauline," he continued aloud, "I appreciate your generosity, believe me!" She sat listless, her face turned from him; he went on: "If a life's devotion can compensate . . ."

"Don't speak to me!" she interrupted, in a scarcely audible voice. "Don't try to understand me. Go—go!"

"If you really wish it, I will leave you, Pauline," he returned, secretly a little relieved. "Perhaps, under the circumstances, I'd better not announce our . . . ?"

She turned upon him savagely. "Do you wish me to hate you?"

"By Jove!" ejaculated the diplomatist. He bowed stiffly, and sauntered away. Pauline, after a while, laid her face upon her arms and wept unrestrainedly. For some time no one came to disturb her, and what was unbearable of her emotion had the opportunity to relieve itself. At length she sat up, mechanically wiping her eyes with her handkerchief, and wondering to find the sun so bright and the air so soft. It was a strange world!

"Mademoiselle Gordoni!" called a brisk young voice, "I have been hunting for you everywhere!" Pauline looked up, and saw Gabrielle. "Everybody wants to see you!" continued that young lady, coming towards her across the grass, with the skirt of her dress in her hand.

"I am so tired of exhibiting myself," said Pauline languidly.

"Then you shall do as you please," returned the little hostess sympathetically. "Oh, do you know I'm awfully grateful to you!"

"You?" murmured the other, absently.

"Yes, for refusing him, you know. I'm certain he couldn't have made you happy."

"Perhaps not, dear. Perhaps you will make him a better wife than I—"

"A wife!" repeated Gabrielle, puzzled. "I was talking about papa!"

"Pardon me, dear—I was . . . half asleep. Your father?" She gave a weary sigh. "I cannot marry him, Gabrielle."

"If you don't mind my saying it—I think you and Mr. Yorke are much better suited to each other."

Pauline shook her head. "Think so no longer, dear. You must make him happy, not I."

"Oh, indeed, I shall do no such thing! In the first place, I'm afraid of him."

"Gabrielle," said Pauline, rousing herself, "there was never a heart like his, so deep and so tender. To live under the influence of his mind . . . child! you will be the most blessed woman on earth when you become his wife."

The unselfish fervour of the great singer's soul touched the worldly little heart of the banker's daughter. "Dear Pauline," she said affectionately, "I would as soon think of marrying an Egyptian obelisk as Stephen. I understand the one about as much as the other. I'm not really clever—only rather—shrewd! But you do understand him; you can be happy with great ideas. You don't need to seek distraction in the world and in fashion; any empty-headed woman can do that; but there is only one Gordoni!"

"Ah!" sighed the singer, "art is glorious, but artists are slaves. My slavery has lasted long enough. The wife of Stephen Yorke will not find life monotonous!"

"But I tell you I don't and can't love him!" persisted Gabrielle almost plaintively. "I want a much less tremendous man!"

"Gabrielle!" exclaimed the other, with a sudden misgiving, "is it possible you care for—for any one else?"

Gabrielle coloured a little, and smiled a good deal. "I think I prefer diplomacy to art," she said, with the small subtlety that was characteristic of her; "and I should dearly like to . . . go to America. Oh, here comes Mr. Scott!"

"Am I doomed to mar all other lives as well as my own?" thought poor Pauline, heartbrokenly.

"Come, this is too bad!" declared Ivo, running down the steps. "Are you two ladies aware that Society is inconsolable over your absence? There's Lord Paddington inquiring after the *Diva*, the gallant and engaging American searching for Miss Goldsborough, and Herr Something-or-other going to play a violin solo in the drawing-room; not to mention dear papa, who is rushing up and down after everybody! And as for myself, I am deputed to bring you to the front. Will you come?"

Pauline rose; but at the foot of the steps she dismissed Ivo, who thereupon returned to Gabrielle. "But don't you want to hear the solo, Mr. Scott?" she inquired demurely, as he took his place on the bench by her side.

"I think a duet is better fun," he replied.

"Tell me something about America—what are the people like?"

"Hum . . . You know Colonel Sparks?"

"Are they all like him?"

"More or less, I fancy."

"And are the women like him, too?"

"I shouldn't wonder."

"I'm glad of that!"

"Is the gallant Colonel so captivating?" demanded Ivo, with a laugh.

"I mean I shouldn't be jealous of him if he were a woman!"

"Oh! Well, I trust none of the women will be like you."

"Why?"

"Men's hearts are not marble," explained he, sentimentally.

"You will enjoy America," said Gabrielle with a sigh. "At least, I should!"

"Really?"

"Society, there, doesn't snub you because your grandfather happened to buy his own coat of arms. I'm tired of making up to great ladies because papa wants to get into society. I should be quite content to be always——"

"To be always what?" asked Ivo, taking one of her hands in his.

She glanced at him sidelong. "As I am now!" she answered, immediately after withdrawing her hand very gently, and rising. "I see Mr. Yorke and papa coming this way," she presently added. "Are you coming into the house?"

"By Jove! have I been on the wrong tack all this time?" Ivo demanded of himself, as he followed her meditatively up the steps. "She is deucedly sympathetic!"

XI.

MARRIED.

"No, no, Stephen," Sir Montagu was saying, "I will positively take no refusal. I have set my heart on your dining with us this evening."

"You're very good, but I must get back to town at once."

"Really? Then perhaps I'd better explain to you now what I had intended—er—introducing after dinner."

"By all means," returned Yorke, listlessly.

"It concerns two friends of yours, Stephen," the baronet began.

"Ah!"

"Pauline Gordoni and—myself!"

"Oh!"

"Now, my dear boy, I want your assistance. You are not, I apprehend, aware that an—er—important modification has just taken place in Pauline's prospects!"

"I know—she's going to America."

"She's not likely to go so far as that," said the baronet, with a private chuckle. "I refer to another circumstance. She's the daughter, I should premise, of Captain Gordon, who was killed at Lucknow, and the niece of Sir Percy Gordon, Bart., of Cedarhurst, Kent. Her brother, and indeed all her relations, cut her after her first appearance as a singer, and she hasn't seen her uncle since she was a child. Now I am coming to the point. Sir Percy Gordon died late last night: my firm has carried on all the—er—affairs of the Gordons for many years past. The property is not entailed. Young Percy Gordon, whom I believe you have met, was destined by his uncle to marry a Kentish lady of good family, and to succeed to the baronetcy and the estates at Cedarhurst."

"Well, he does succeed to them, does he?"

"To the baronetcy and a few hundreds per annum—yes. But the estates, my dear boy—the estates are left to Pauline!"

"Rather a strange will!" observed Stephen, after a pause.

"Decidedly so. The fact is, Sir Percy altered his first intention only a few days ago. The youngster, it seems, had got into a scrape a while back—the old story—an idle young fellow and a pretty orphan girl in the Channel Islands——"

"What?" exclaimed Stephen. "In which island?"

"Er—let me see—I think it was Jersey. Well, of course it was a

bad business, the more so as Sir Percy discovered the girl's father to have been a worthy old fisherman, whom he had once met and taken a fancy to on the Northumberland coast."

Stephen was terribly aroused, but outwardly very quiet. "Do you know his name?" he demanded.

"Whose name?"

"The old fisherman's!"

"I do happen to remember it, because—er—er——"

"Because what?"

"Because—er—er—an odd coincidence: it's the same as your own."

"I have found him!" muttered Stephen, drawing a deep breath and moving a step or two apart.

"One can't help feeling for the young man after all," observed Sir Montagu, charitably: "boys will be boys, you know; and this will be altogether a terrible blow for him, for of course it puts a stop to his marriage—"

"His marriage!" growled Stephen. "The villain!"

"He desires me to manage his affairs," continued the unconscious baronet, "and as the matter needs talking over, I have telegraphed him to dine here this evening."

"This evening? Then I'll stay and meet him," Stephen said.

"By all means do so!" exclaimed the baronet cordially. "And, by the bye, if you would speak to his sister——"

"His sister . . . Oh, Pauline!" murmured Yorke, with a pang of remorse in the midst of his revengeful preoccupation. He had not thought of the relationship before.

"Sir Montagu!" called the voice of Ivo from the balcony, "Gordon is in the drawing-room; he has told me the result——"

"Arrived already!" exclaimed the baronet. "Good! I'll fetch him. Here's Yorke is anxious to see him."

"Hum! no—better not," returned Ivo in an undertone. "There are reasons why they should not meet."

"Oh, nonsense!" persisted the good-humoured Sir Montagu. "They have met already; I'll go and fetch him." And away he went.

Ivo came down with some unformed plan in his mind to get Yorke quietly out of the way; but as soon as he saw the expression on the artist's face, he perceived it was too late.

"Ivo, I've found the man," Stephen said, quite composedly, but with a very uncomfortable significance.

"My dear Stephen, remember that you can do nothing here," entreated the diplomatist, greatly disturbed. "A private quarrel, however weighty, cannot be explained away in a friend's house."

"Explained away?" repeated Stephen, with a grim laugh. "He shall answer me with his life."

"And publish your sister's shame to the world? You are mad!"

"I am," replied Stephen quietly, "for the first and last time. Ha! There he is,"

"Here, Yorke, here is our young friend, the new baronet," cried Sir Montagu, as he and Gordon descended to the lawn where Yorke and Scott were standing. Gordon came forward and offered his hand. Yorke put his behind his back.

"Sir Percy Gordon," said he in a tone that all could hear, "I am happy to have this public opportunity of reminding you that you are a scoundrel."

Scott bit his moustache, and looked down. Sir Montagu's jaw fell, and he stood utterly dumbfounded. Gordon grew very red and looked his antagonist squarely in the face. At this juncture Pauline and Gabrielle came out on the balcony, and the former, on perceiving what was going on, ran swiftly down the steps and put herself between the two men.

"Stephen, he is my brother!" she said defiantly.

"There is no need for any further concealment," the young baronet observed, bowing gravely to his sister, and looking round on the assembled faces. "Mr. Yorke, you are hasty, and I do not deserve your accusation. Your sister is my wife."

At this there was a total silence; but it was a speaking silence. In a few moments an uncontrollable trembling seized upon Stephen, and sweat broke out upon his forehead. Those words "my wife" went thrilling through him like electric shocks. Meanwhile he was aware that Gordon was still speaking.

"We were married in London the day after she left Jersey with me," the latter said. "I deceived every one but her. Knowing that if the report of my marriage reached my uncle's ears he would disinherit me, I concealed it from him and from all—even from you, Mr. Yorke, who otherwise would have been the first to know it. I can say no more, except that the estates are my sister's; and, Mr. Yorke, I ask your pardon."

"You have it," Stephen answered unsteadily; "but—we will shake hands another time."

The party stayed to dinner at Sir Montagu's table; and before the evening was over, there were two pairs of lovers in a very happy and contented frame of mind. Pauline and Stephen had found out that the giving and hearing of explanations was an employment only less inexhaustible than it was agreeable; and Ivo and Gabrielle were interminably absorbed in American speculations. Colonel Sparks took his leave rather early, as he wished to obtain an interview with Madame Frangipani after the opera; and Sir Montagu and Sir Percy made an excuse to retire to the billiard room, where they smoked cigars and talked business until a late hour.

Cherubino.

A PSYCHOLOGICAL ART FANCY.

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It is a strange and beautiful fact that whatsoever is touched by genius, no matter how humble in itself, becomes precious and immortal. This wrinkled old woman is merely one of thousands like herself, who have sat and will sit by the great porcelain stove of the Dutch backshop, their knitting or their Bible on their knees. There is nothing to make her recollected; yet we know her after two centuries, even as if we had seen her alive, because, with a few blurred lines and shadows hastily scratched on his etching plate, it pleased the whim of Master Rembrandt to pourtray her. And this little commonplace Frankfort shop-keeper's maiden, in her stiff little cap and starched frill, who should remember her? Yet she is familiar to us all, because she struck the boyish fancy of Goethe. For even as the fact of its once having sparkled on the waistcoat of Mozart makes us treasure up a tarnished brass button, and as the notion of their having been planted by the hand of Michael Angelo made us mourn the cutting down of a clump of sear and rusty old cypresses, so also the fact of having been noticed, noted down by genius with brush, or pen, or chisel, makes into relics men and things which would else have been forgotten; because the stroke of that pen, or brush, or chisel, removes them from the perishable world of reality to the deathless world of fancy. Nay, even the beautiful things, the perfect, physically or morally, of the world, those which called forth admiration and love as long as they existed, Antinous and Mona Lisa, Beatrice and Laura, would now be but a handful of nameless dust, were it not for the artists and poets who have made them live again and for ever; the deeds and sufferings of the Siegfrieds and Cids, of the Desdemonas and Francescas, would have died away had they not been filched out of the world of reality into the world of fiction. And even as the perishable, the humble, the insignificant reality becomes enduring and valuable by the touch of genius, so also in the very world of fiction itself the intellectual creations of one man may be raised to infinitely higher regions by the hand of another, may be transported into the kingdom of another and nobler art, and there be seen more universally and surrounded by a newly acquired radiance. In this manner the tale of Romeo and Juliet, graciously and tenderly narrated by the old Italian story-teller, was transfigured by Shakespeare and enshrined in all the splendours of Elizabethan poetry; the figure of Psyche, delicately graceful in the little romance of Apuleius, reappeared,

enlarged and glorified by the hand of Raphael, on the walls of the Farnesina; and thus also our Cherubino, the fanciful and brilliant creature of Beaumarchais, is known to most of us far less in his original shape than in the vague form woven out of subtle melodies to which Mozart has given the page's name. Mozart has, as it were, taken away Cherubino from Beaumarchais; he has, for the world at large, substituted for the page of the comedy the page of the opera. Beaumarchais could give us clear-spoken words, dialogue and action, a visible and tangible creature, and Mozart could give only a certain arrangement of notes, a certain amount of rhythm and harmony, a vague, speechless, shapeless thing; yet much more than the written words do those notes represent to our fancy the strange and fascinating little figure, the wayward, the amorous, the prankish, the incarnation of childishness, of gallantry, of grace, of fun, and of mischief, the archetype of pages—the page Cherubino. What could music do for Cherubino? of what means could it dispose to reproduce this type, this figure? and how did, how should music have disposed of those means? About this fantastic and brilliant little jackanapes of a page centres a curious question of artistic anomaly, of artistic power, and of artistic duty.

The part of Cherubino, the waywardness, the love, the levity, the audacity, the timidity, the maturity and immaturity of the page's feelings, are all concentrated by the admirable ingenuity of the Venetian D'Aponte, who arranged Beaumarchais' play for Mozart's music, into one air, the air sung by Cherubino in that very equivocal interview with the Countess and Susanna, so rudely to be broken by the thundering rap of the Count at the door. The air is "*Voi che sapete*"—Cherubino's description, half to the noble and sentimental lady, half to the flippant and laughing waiting-maid, of the curious symptoms, the mysterious hankerings and attractions which the boy has of late begun to experience—symptoms of which he is half ashamed, as calculated to bring down laughter and boxes on the ear, and half proud, mischievously conscious that they make him a personage for all this womankind. Every one has heard "*Voi che sapete*" sung a hundred times by dozens of singers in dozens of fashions, till it has become in the recollection a sort of typical jumble of all these various readings; but we once chanced to hear a reading of "*Voi che sapete*" which has remained strangely distinct and separate in our remembrance; which made that performance of the hackneyed piece remain isolated in our mind, almost as if the air had never before or never since been heard by us. The scene of the performance has remained in our memory as a whole, because the look, the attitude, the face of the performer seemed to form a whole, a unity of expression and character, with the inflexions of the voice and the accentuation of the words. She was standing by the piano: a Spanish Creole, but, instead of the precocious, overblown magnificence of tropical natures, with a something almost childlike, despite seriousness, something inflexible, unexpanded, unripe about her; quite small, slender, infinitely slight and delicate; standing perfectly straight

and motionless in her long, tight dress of ashy rose colour; her little dark head with its tight coils of ebony hair perfectly erect; her great dark violet-circled eyes, with their perfect ellipse of curved eyebrow meeting curved eyelash, black and clear against the pale, ivory-tinted cheek, looking straight before her; self-unconscious, concentrated, earnest, dignified, with only a faint fluttering smile, to herself, not to the audience, about the mouth. She sang the page's song in a strange voice, sweet and crisp, like a Cremonese violin, with a bloom of youth, scarcely mature yet perfect, like the honey dust of the vine-flower; sang the piece with an unruffled serenity, with passion, no limpness or languor, but passion restrained, or rather undeveloped; with at most a scarcely perceptible hesitation and reticence of accent, as of budding youthful emotion; her voice seeming in some unaccountable manner to move in a higher, subtler stratum of atmosphere, as it dexterously marked, rounded off, kissed away each delicate little phrase. When she had done, she gave a slight bow with her proud little head, half modestly and half contemptuously, as, with her rapid, quiet movement, she resumed her seat; she probably felt that, despite the applause, her performance did not really please. No one criticised, for there was something that forbade criticism in this solemn little creature; and every one applauded, for every one felt that her singing had been admirable. But there was no warmth of admiration, no complete satisfaction: she had sung with wonderful delicacy, and taste and feeling; her performance had been exquisitely finished, perfect; but something familiar, something essential had been missing. She had left out Cherubino: she had completely forgotten and passed over the page.

How was it? How could it be that the something which we felt was the nature of the page, the something which even the coarsest, poorest performers had brought out in this piece, had completely disappeared in this wonderfully perfect rendering by this subtle little singer? Perhaps the rendering had been only materially perfect: perhaps it was merely the exquisite tone of the voice, the wonderful neatness of execution which had given it an appearance of completeness; perhaps the real meaning of the music had escaped her; perhaps there was behind all this perfection of execution only a stolid dullness of nature, to which the genius of Mozart was not perceptible. None of all these possibilities and probabilities: the chief characteristic of the performance was exactly the sense of perfect musical intuition, of subtle appreciation of every little intonation, the sense that this docile and exquisite physical instrument was being played upon by a keen and unflinching artistic intelligence. The more you thought over it, the more you compared this performance with any other performance of the piece, the more also did you feel convinced that this was the right, the only right reading of the piece; that this strange, serious little dark creature had given you the whole, the perfection of Mozart's conception; no, there could be no doubt of it, this and this alone was Mozart's idea of "*Voi che sapete*."

Mozart's idea? the whole of Mozart's conception? here, in this delicate, dignified, idyllic performance? The whole? Why then, where, if this was the whole of Mozart's conception, where was Cherubino, where was the page? Why nowhere. Now that the song had been presented to us in its untampered perfection, that the thought of the composer was clear to us—now that we could begin to analyse the difference between this performance and the performances of other singers—we began to see, vaguely at first and not without doubts of our powers of sight, but to see, and more and more distinctly the longer we looked, that Cherubino was not in Mozart's work, but merely in Beaumarchais. A very singular conclusion to arrive at, but one not to be shirked: Cherubino had passed into the words of Mozart's Italian libretto, he had passed into the dress, the face, the feature, the action of the thousands of performers who had sung the "Marriage of Figaro" on the stage; but he had not passed into Mozart's notes; and because he had not entered into those notes, that subtle and serious little Spaniard, who had seen and understood so well the meaning and beauty of Mozart's music, had known nothing of Cherubino.

Now, after all this discussion respecting his presence and his absence, let us stay awhile and examine into the being of this Cherubino, so familiar and so immediately missed by us; let us look at the page, whom the clever playwright D'Aponte transported, with extraordinary success, out of the French comedy into the Italian opera text. Very familiar to all of us, yet, like the things most familiar, rather vaguely; seen often and in various lights, fluctuating consequently in our memory, as distinguished from the distinct and steadfast image of things seen only once and printed off at a stroke on to our mind. At the first glance, when we see him sitting at the feet of the Countess, singing her his lovesongs, he seems a delicate poetic exotic, whose presence takes us quite aback in the midst of the rouged and pigtailed philosophy, the stucco and tinsel sentimentality of the French eighteenth century. In these rooms, all decorated by Boucher and Fragonard, in this society redolent with the theories of Diderot and the jests of Voltaire, this page, this boy, who is almost a girl, with his ribbons, his ballads, his blushes, his guitar, and his rapier, appears like a thing of long past days, or of far distant countries; a belated brother of Shakspeare's Cesario and Fletcher's Bellario, a straggler from the Spain of Lope de Vega, who has followed M. Caron de Beaumarchais, ex-watchmaker and ex-musicmaster to Mesdames the daughters of Louis XV., from Madrid, and leaped suddenly on to the planks of the *Comédie Française* . . . , a ghost of some mediæval boy page, some little Jehan de Saintré killed crusading with his lady's name on his lips. Or is not Cherubino rather a solitary forerunner of romanticism, stumbled untimely into this France of Marie Antoinette; some elder brother of Goethe's Mignon . . . nay, perhaps Mignon herself, disguised as or metamorphosed into a boy? . . . But let us look well at him: let him finish his song and raise his audacious eyes; let him rise and be pulled

to and fro, bashful with false bashfulness, half covering his mischievous, monkish impudence, while Susanna is mumming him up in petticoats and kerchiefs; let us look at him again now, and we shall see that he is no Jehan de Saintré, no male Mignon, no Viola in boy's clothes, no sweetly pure little romantic figure, but an impertinent, precocious little Lovelace, a serio-comic little jackanapes, sighing and weeping only to giggle and pirouette on his heels the next moment. From the Countess he will run to the gardener's daughter, from her to the waiting-maid, to the duenna, to all womankind; he is a professed lady-killer and woman-teaser of thirteen. There is indeed something graceful and romantic in the idea of this pretty child consoling, with his poetical, absurd love, the poor neglected, ill-used lady. But then he has been smuggled in by that dubious Abigail, Susanna; the sentimental, melancholy Countess is amused by dressing him up in woman's clothes; and when, in the midst of the masquerade, the voice of the Count is heard without, the page is huddled away into a closet, his presence is violently denied, and the Countess admits her adored though fickle lord with a curious, conscious, half-guilty embarrassment. We feel vaguely that Shakspeare would never have introduced his boy Ganymede or his page Cesario into that dressing-room of the Countess Almaviva; that the archly jesting Maria would never have dreamed of amusing the Lady Olivia with such mumblings; we miss in this proudly sentimental lady, in this sly waiting-woman, in this calf-loving dressed-up boy the frank and boisterous merriment of Portia and Nerissa in their escapades and mystifications; there is in all this too much locking of doors and drawing of curtains, too much whispered giggling, too little audible laughter; there hangs an indefinable sense of impropriety about the whole scene. No, no, this is no delicate and gracious young creature of the stock of Elizabethan pages, no sweet exotic in the France of 1780; this Cherubino is merely a graceful, coquettish little Greuze figure, with an equivocal simplicity, an ogling *naïveté*, a smirking bashfulness, a hidden audacity of corruption; a creature of Sterne or Marivaux, tricked out in imitation mediæval garb, with the stolen conscious wink of the eye, the would-be childlike smile, tinged with leer, of eighteenth-century gallantry. He is an impertinent, effeminate, fondled, cynical little jackanapes; the youngest, childish, monkeyish example, at present merely comic and contemptible, of the miserable type of young lovers given to France by the eighteenth century; the *enfant du siècle*, externally a splendid, brilliant, triumphant success, internally a miserable, broken, unmanned failure; the child initiated into life by cynicism, the youth educated to love by adultery; corrupt unripeness; the most miserable type of demoralisation ever brought into literature, the type of Fortunio and Perdican, and of their author Alfred de Musset; a type which the Elizabethans, with their Claudios and Giovannis, could not have conceived; which the Spaniards, with their Don Juans and Ludovic Enios, would have despised, they who had brought on to the stage profligacy which bearded death and hell, turning

with contempt from profligacy which could be chastised only with the birch. Cherubino is this: his love is no poetic and silly passion for a woman much older than himself, before whom he sinks on his knees as before a goddess; it is the instinct of the lady-killer, the instinct of adventures, the consciousness in this boy of thirteen that all womankind is his destined prey, his game, his quarry. And womankind instinctively understands and makes the Lovelace of thirteen its darling, its toy, its kitten, its pet monkey, all whose grimacings and coaxings and impertinences may be endured, enjoyed, encouraged. He is the graceful, brilliant, apish Ariel or Puck of the society whose *Mirandas* and *Titianias* are *Julie* and *Manon Lescaut*; he is the page of the French eighteenth century.

Such is, when we analyse him, the page Cherubino; looking at him carelessly, with the carelessness of familiarity, these various peculiarities escape our notice; they merge into each other and into the whole figure. But although we do not perceive them consciously and in detail, we take in, vaguely and unconsciously, their total effect: we do not analyse Cherubino and classify his qualities, we merely take him in as a general type. And it is this confused and familiar entity which we call the page, and which we expect to have brought home to us as soon as we hear the first notes, as we see the title of "*Voi che sapete*." It is this entity, this character thus vaguely conceived, which forms for us an essential part of Mozart's music; and whose absence from that music made us feel as if, despite the greatest musical perfection, Mozart's idea were not completely given to us. Yet, in reality, this psychological combination called Cherubino does not exist in the work of Mozart. It exists only by the side of it. We speak of the "*Marriage of Figaro*" as Mozart's work; we are accustomed to think of the Countess, of Figaro, of Susanna, of Cherubino as belonging to Mozart; but in reality only one half of the thing we call the "*Marriage of Figaro*" belongs to Mozart—that half which consists in melodies and harmonies; and as it happens, it is not in that, but in the other half belonging to Beaumarchais and D'Aponte, the half consisting of words and their suggestions of character, of expression and of movement, that really exists either the Countess, or Figaro, or Susanna, or Cherubino. Those notes, which alone are Mozart's, and which are nothing more than notes, have been heard by us in the mouths of many women dressed and acting as Beaumarchais's characters; they have been heard by us associated to the words of Beaumarchais; they have been heard delivered with the dramatic inflections suggested not by themselves but by those words; and thus, by mere force of association, of slovenly thought and active fancy, we are accustomed to consider all these characters as existing in the music of Mozart, as being part and parcel of Mozart's conception; and when we are presented with those notes, which, to the musician Mozart, were merely notes without those dramatic inflections suggested solely by Beaumarchais's words, when we hear in "*Voi che sapete*"

only Mozart's half of the work, we are disappointed and indignant, and cry out that the composer's idea has been imperfectly rendered.

Cherubino, we say, is not in Mozart's half of the work; he is in the words, not in the music. Is this a fault or a merit? is it impotence in the art or indifference in the artist? Could Mozart have given us Cherubino? and if able, ought he to have given him? The question is double; a question of artistic dynamics, and a question of artistic ethics: the question what can art do; and the question, what art ought to do. The first has been answered by the scientific investigations of our own scientific times; the second has been answered by the artistic practice of the truly artistic days of music. The questions are strangely linked together, and yet strangely separate; and woe betide us if we receive the answer to the one question as the answer to the other; if we let the knowledge of what things are serve us instead of the instinct of what things should do; if we let scientific analysis step into the place of ethical or æsthetic judgment; and if, in the domain of art or of morals, we think to substitute a system of alembics and microscopes for that strange intangible mechanism which science tells us does not exist, and which indeed science can never see or clutch, our soul. For science has a singular contempt for all that is without its domain; it seeks for truth, but when truth baffles and eludes it, science will turn towards falsehood; it will deny what it cannot prove, and call God himself a brain-phantom because he cannot be vivisected. So, when logic, which can solve only logical propositions, remains without explanation before the dicta of the moral and æsthetic parts of us, it simply denies the existence of such dicta and replaces them by its own formulæ; if we ask for the aim of things and actions, it tells us their origin; if we trustingly ask when we should admire beauty and love virtue, it drops the rainbow into its crucible to discover its chemical components, and dissects the brain of a saint to examine the shape of its convolutions; it meets admiration and love with experiment and analysis, and, where we are required to judge, tells us we can only examine. Thus, as in ethics, so also in æsthetics, modern philosophy has given us the means instead of the aim, the analysis instead of the judgment; let us therefore ask it only how much of human character and emotion music *can* express; the question how much of it music *ought* to express must be answered by something else: by that artistic instinct whose composition and mechanism and origin scientific psychology may perhaps some day explain, but whose unformulated, inarticulate, half-unconscious dicta all the scientific and logical formulæ in the world can never replace. As yet, however, we have to deal only with the question how much of human character and emotion music can express, and by what means it does so; and here modern psychology, or rather the genius of Herbert Spencer, is able to answer us. Why does dance music cheer us, and military music inspire us, and sacred music make us solemn? A vague sense of the truth made æstheticians answer, for well-nigh two centuries, "by the force of asso-

ciation." Dance music cheers us because we are accustomed to hear it in connection with laughing and quips and cranks; military music inspirits us because we are accustomed to hear it in connection with martial movements and martial sights; sacred music depresses us because we are accustomed to hear it at moments when we are contemplating our weakness and mortality; 'tis a mere matter of association. To this easy-going way of disposing of the problem there was an evident and irrefutable objection: but why should we be accustomed to hear a given sort of music in connection with these various conditions of mind? Why should dance music, and martial music, and sacred music all have a perfectly distinct character, which forbade, from the very first, their being exchangeable? If it is a matter of association of ideas, tell us why such characters could have been kept distinct before the association of ideas could have begun to exist. To this objection there was no reply; the explanation of musical expression by means of association of ideas seemed utterly hollow; yet the confused idea of such an association persisted. For it was, after all, the true explanation. If we ask modern psychology the reason of the specific characters of the various sorts of music, we shall again be answered: it is owing to the association of ideas. But the two answers, though apparently identical, are in fact radically different. The habit of association existed, according to the old theory, between various mental conditions and various sorts of music, because the two were usually found in connection; hence no explanation why, before habit had created the association, there should have been any connection, and, there being no connection, no explanation why the habit and consequently the mental association should ever have been formed. According to the modern theory, on the contrary, the habit of association is not between the various mental conditions and the various styles of music, but between specific mental conditions and specific sounds and movements, which sounds and movements, being employed as the constituent elements of music, give to the musical forms into which they have been artistically arranged that inevitable suggestion of a given mental condition which is due to memory, and become, by repetition during thousands of years, an instinct ingrained in the race and in-born in the individual, a recognition rapid and unconscious, that certain audible movements are the inevitable concomitants of certain moral conditions. The half-unconscious memory become part and parcel of the human mind, that, just as certain mental conditions induce a movement in the muscles which brings tears into the eyes or a knot into the throat, so also certain audible movements are due to the muscular tension resulting from mental buoyancy, and certain others to the muscular relaxation due to mental depression, this half-unconscious memory, this instinct, this inevitable association of ideas, generated long before music existed even in the most rudimentary condition, carried with the various elements of pitch, movement, sonority, and proportion into the musical forms constructed out of these elements, this unconscious

association of ideas, this integrated recollection of the inevitable connection between certain sounds and certain passions is the one main cause and explanation of the expressiveness of music. And when to it we have added the conscious perception, due to actual comparison, of the resemblance between certain modes of musical delivery and certain modes of ordinary speaking accentuation, between certain musical movements and certain movements of the body in gesticulation; when we have completed the instinctive recognition of passion, which makes us cry or jump, we know not why, by the rapidly reasoned recognition of resemblance between the utterance of the art and the utterance of human life, which, when we listen for instance to a recitative, makes us say, "This sentence is absolutely correct in expression," or, "No human being ever said such a thing in such a manner;" when we have the instinctive perception of passion, and the conscious perception of imitation; and we have added to these two the power of tone and harmony, neither of them connected in any way with the expression of emotion, but both rendering us, by their nervous stimulant, infinitely more sensitive to its expression; when we have all this, we have all the elements which the musician can employ to bring home to us a definite state of mind; all the mysterious unspoken, unwritten words by means of which Mozart can describe to us what Beaumarchais has described in clear, logical, spoken, written words—the page Cherubino.

Now let us see how much of Cherubino can be shown us by these mere musical means. Cherubino is childish, coquettish, sentimental, amorous, timid, audacious, fickle; he is self-conscious and self-unconscious, passionately troubled in mind, impudently cool in manner; he is brazen, calm, shy, fluttered; all these things together. Sometimes in rapid alternation, sometimes all together in the same moment; and in all this he is perfectly consistent, he is always one and the same creature. How does the playwright contrive to make us see all this? By means of combinations of words expressing one or more of these various characteristics, by subtle phrases, woven out of different shades of feeling, which glance in iridescent hues like a shot silk, which are both one thing and another; by means also of various emotions cunningly adapted to the exact situation, from the timid sentimentality before the Countess, down to the audacious love-making with the waiting-maid; by means, in short, of a hundred tiny strokes, of words spoken by the page and of the page, by means of dexterously combined views of the boy himself, and of the reflection of the boy in the feelings of those who surround him. Thus far the mere words in the book; but these words in the book suggest a thousand little inflections of voice, looks, gestures, movements, manners of standing and walking, flutter of lips and sparkle of eyes, which exist clear though imaginary in the mind of the reader, and become clearer, visible, audible in the concrete representation of the actor.

Thus Cherubino comes to exist. A phantom of the fancy, a little

figure from out of the shadowland of imagination, but present to our mind as is this floor upon which we tread, alive as is this pulse throbbing within us. Ask the musician to give us all this with his mere pitch, and rhythm and harmony and sonority; bid him describe all this in his language. Alas! in the presence of such a piece of work the musician is a mere dumb cripple, stammering unintelligible sounds, tottering through abortive gestures, pointing we know not whither, asking we know not for what. Passionate music? And is not Othello passionate? Coquettish music? and is not Susanna coquettish? Tender music? and is not Orpheus tender? Cool music? and is not Judas Maccabæus cool? Impudent music? And is not the snatch of dance tune of a Parisian grisette impudent? And which of these sorts of music shall fit our Cherubino, be our page? Shall we fuse, in wonderful nameless abomination of nonsense, all these different styles, these different suggestions, or shall, as in a masquerade, this dubious Cherubino, never seen with his own face and habit, appear successively in the musical trappings of Othello, of Orpheus, of Susanna, of Judas Maccabæus, and of the grisette? Shall we, by means of this fusion, or this succession of musical incongruities, have got one inch nearer to Cherubino? Shall we, in listening to the mere wordless combination of sounds, be able to say, as we should with the book or the actors before us, this is Cherubino? What, then, can music give us, with all its powers of suggestion and feeling, if it cannot give us this? It can give us one thing, not another: it can give us emotion, but it cannot give us the individual whom the emotion possesses. With its determined relations between the audible movement and the psychic movement, it can give us only musical gesture, but never musical portrait; the gesture of composure or of violence, the solemn tread of self-possessed melody, the scuffling of frantically rushing up and down, of throbbing, quivering, gasping, passion-broken musical phrases; it can give us the rhythm which prances and tosses in victory, and the rhythm which droops, and languishes and barely drags itself along for utter despair. All this it can give us, even as the painter can give the ecstatic bound-forwards of Signorelli's "Calling of the Blessed," or the weary, dreary enfolding in gloomy thought of Michael Angelo's "Jeremiah:" this much, which we can only call gesture, and which expresses only one thing, a mood. Let the hopeful heroes of Signorelli, stretching forth impetuous arms towards Paradise, only lose sight of the stately viol-playing angels who guide them, let them suddenly see above them the awful sword of the consorted Angel of Judgment, and they will sink, and grovel, and writhe, and their now upturned faces will be dragged in the dust; let the trumpet of warfare and triumph shrill in the ear of Michael Angelo's "Jeremiah," and the dreary dream will be shaken off; he will leap up, and the compressed hand-gagged mouth will open with the yell of battle; let only the emotion change, and the whole gesture, the attitude, plastic or musical, must change also; the already existing, finite, definite work will no longer suffice; we must have a new picture, or statue, or piece of music. And

in these inexplicit arts of mere suggestion, we cannot say, as in the explicit art of poetry, this grovelling wretch is a proud and hopeful spirit; this violent soldier is a vague dreamer; this Othello, who springs on Desdemona like a wild beast, loves her as tenderly as a mother does her child. Unliterary art, plastic or musical, is inexorable; the man who grovels is no proud man; the man who fells down to the right and left, is no dreamer; the man whose whole soul is wrath and destruction, is no lover; the mood is the mood; art can give only it; and the general character, the connection between moods, the homogeneous something which pervades every phase of passion, however various, escapes the powers of all save the art which can speak and explain. How then obtain our Cherubino? our shiftiest and most fickle of pages? How? Why, by selecting just one of his very many moods, the one which is nearest allied to fickleness and volubility; the mood which must most commonly be the underlying, the connecting one, the mood into which all his swagger and sentiment sooner or later resolve; the tone of voice into which his sobs will quickest be lost, the attitude which will soonest replace the defiant strut; the frame of mind which, though one and indivisible itself, is the nearest to instability: levity.

Let Cherubino sing words of tenderness and passion, of audacity and shyness, to only one sort of music, to light and careless music; let the jackanapes be for ever before us, giggling and pirouetting in melody and rhythm; it will not be Cherubino, the whole Cherubino; it will be only a miserable fragmentary indication of him, but it will be the right indication; the psychological powers of music do not go far, but thus far they can go. Analysis of the nature of musical expression has shown us how much it may accomplish; the choice of the artist alone can tell us how much it should accomplish; the scientific investigation is at an end, the artistic judgment must begin. Chapelmaster Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, here are your means of musical expression, and here is the thing to be expressed; on careful examination it appears distinctly that the only way in which, with your melodies, rhythms, and harmonies, you can give us, not a copy, but a faint indicative sketch, something approaching the original as much as four lines traced in the alley sand of your Schloss Mirabell Gardens at Salzburg resemble the general aspect of the Mirabell Palace; that the only way in which you can give us such a distantly approximative

Signor Maestro Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Vice-Chapelmaster of His Most Reverend Highness the Prince Archbishop of Salzburg, has meanwhile sat down at his table near his thin-legged spinet, with the birdcage above and the half-emptied beer-glass at his side; and his pen is going scratch, scratch, scratch as loud as possible.

"The only way in which you can possibly give us such a distantly approximative copy of the 'page Cherubino as shown' . . . (Scratch, scratch, scratch goes the pen on the rough music paper), "as shown in the words of Beaumarchais and of your librettist D'Aponte, is to com

pose music of the degree of levity required to express the temper *jack-anapes*."

The Chapelmaster Mozart's pen gives an additional triumphant creak as its point bends in the final flourish of the word *finis*; Chapelmaster Mozart looks up—

"What was that you were saying about jackanapes? Oh, yes, to be sure, you were saying that literary folks who try to prescribe to musicians are jackanapes, weren't you? Now, do me the favour, when you go out, just take this to the theatre copyist; they are waiting in a hurry for Cherubino's song. . . . Yes, that was all very interesting about the jackanapes and all the things music can express. . . . Who would have thought that musical expression is all that? Lord, Lord, what a fine thing it is to have a reasoning head and know all about the fundamental moods of people's characters! My dear sir, why don't you print a treatise on the musical interpretation of the jackanapes and send it to the University of Vienna for a prize? that would be a treatise for you! Only do be a good creature and take this song at once to the copyist. . . . I assure you I consider you the finest musical philosopher in Christendom."

The blotted, still half-wet sheet of note-paper is handed across by Chapelmaster Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. It is the manuscript of "*Voi che sapete*."

"But, dearest Chapelmaster Mozart, the air which you have just written appears to be not in the least degree light—it is even extremely sentimental. How can you, with such phrases, express the Cherubino of Beaumarchais?"

"And who, my dear Mr. Music Philosopher, who the deuce told you that I wanted to express the Cherubino of Beaumarchais?"

Chapelmaster Mozart, rising from his table, walks up and down the room with his hands crossed beneath his snuff-coloured coat-tails, humming to himself—

*Voi che sapete che cosa è amor,
Donne, vedete s'io l'ho nel cor,*

and stops before the cage hanging in the window, and twitching the chickweed through the wires, says—

"Twee! twee! isn't that a fine air we have just composed, little canary-bird, eh?"

"Twee! twee!" answers the canary.

Mozart has willed it so: there is no possible appeal against his decision; his artistic sense would not listen to our logic; our arguments could not attain him, for he simply shook from off his feet the dust of logic land, and calmly laughed defiance from the region of artistic form, where he had it all his own way, and into which we poor wretches can never clamber. So here is the page's song irrevocably sentimental; and Mozart has been in his grave ninety years; and we know not why, but we do shrink from calling in Offenbach or Lecocq to rewrite that air

in true jackanapsian style. What can be done? There still remains another hope.

For the composer, as we have seen, could give us—as could the painter or the sculptor—only one mood at a time; for he could give us only one homogeneous artistic form. But this artistic form exists so far only in the abstract, in the composer's brain or on the paper. To render it audible we require the performer; on the performer depends the real, absolute presence of the work; or, rather, to the performer is given the task of creating a second work, of applying on to the abstract composition the living inflexions and accentuations of the voice. And here, again, the powers of musical expression, of awaking association by means of sounds or manner of giving out sounds such as we recognise, automatically or consciously, to accompany the emotion that is to be conveyed, here again these powers are given to the artist to do therewith what he chooses. This second artist, this performer, is not so free indeed as the first artist, the composer; he can no longer choose among the large means of expression the forms of melody and rhythm, the concatenation of musical phrases; but there are still left to him the minor modes of expression, the particular manner of setting forth these musical forms, of treating this rhythm; the notes are there, and their general relations to one another, but on him depends the choice of the relative stress on the notes, of the tightening or slackening of their relations; of the degree of importance to be given to the various phrases. The great outline cartoon is there, but the cunning lights and shades, transitions, abrupt or insensible, from tint to tint, still remain to be filled up. A second choice of mood is left to the singer. And see! here arises a strange complication: the composer having in his work chosen one mood, and the singer another, we obtain in the fusion or juxtaposition of the two, works of the two moods, that very thing we desired, that very shimmer and oscillation of character which the poet could give, that dualism of nature required for Cherubino. What is Cherubino? A sentimental jackanapes. Mozart in his notes has given us the sentiment, and now we can get the levity from the performer—unthought-of combination, in which the very irrational, illogical choice made by the composer will help us. Here are Mozart's phrases, earnest, tender, noble—Mozart's love song fit for a Bel-lario or a Romeo; now let this be sung quickly, lightly, with perverse musical head-tossing and tripping and ogling, let this passion be gabbled out flippantly, impudently—and then, in this perfect mixture of the noble and ignoble, of emotion and levity, of poetry and prose, we shall have, at last, the page of Beaumarchais. A brilliant combination; a combination which, thus reasoned out, seems so difficult to conceive; yet one which the instinct of half, nay, of nearly all the performers in creation, would suggest. A page? A jackanapes? Sing the music as befits him; giggle and ogle, and pirouette, and languish out Mozart's music: a universal idea, now become part and parcel of tradition; the only new version possible being to give more or less of the various elements of

giggling, ogling, pirouetting, and languishing; to slightly vary the style of jackanapes.

But no; another version did remain possible: that strange version given by that strange solemn little Spanish singer, after whose singing of "Voi che sapete" we all felt dissatisfied, and asked each other "What has she done with the page?" That wonderful reading of the piece in which every large outline was so grandly and delicately traced, every transition so subtly graduated or marked, every little ornament made to blossom out beneath the touch of the singular crisp, sweet voice: that reading which left out the page. Was it the blunder of an idealess vocal machine? or the contradictory eccentricity of a seeker after impossible novelty? Was it simply the dulness of a sullen, soulless little singer? Surely not. She was neither an idealess vocal machine, nor a crotchety seeker for new readings, nor a soulless sullen little creature; she was a power in art. A power, alas! wasted for ever, of little or no profit to others or herself; a beautiful and delicate artistic plant uprooted just as it was bursting into blossom, and roughly thrown to wither in the sterile dust of common life, while all around the insolent weeds lift up their prosperous tawdry heads. Of this slender little dark creature, with the delicate stern face of the young Augustus, not a soul will ever remember the name. She will not even have enjoyed the cheap triumphs of her art, the applause which endures two seconds, and the stalkless flowers which wither in a day; the clapping which interrupts the final flourish, the tight-packed nosegays which thump down before the feet, of every fiftieth-rate mediocrity. Yet the artistic power will have been there, though gone to waste in obscurity; and the singer will have sung, though only for a day, and for that day unnoticed. Nothing can alter that. And nothing can alter the fact that, while the logical heads of all the critics, and the soulless throats of all the singers in Christendom have done their best, and ever will do their best, to give us a real musical Cherubino, a real sentimental whipper-snapper of a page, this utterly unnoticed little singer did persist in leaving out the page most completely and entirely. Why? Had you asked her, she would have been the last person in the world capable of answering the question. Did she consider the expression of such a person as Cherubino a prostitution of the art? Had she some theory respecting the propriety of dramatic effects in music? Not in the very least; she considered nothing and theorised about nothing: she probably never had such a thing as a thought in the whole course of her existence. She had only an unswerving artistic instinct, a complete incapacity of conceiving the artistically wrong, an imperious unreasoning tendency to do the artistically right. She had read Mozart's air, understood its exquisite proportions, created it afresh in her appreciation, and she sang it in such a way as to make its beauty more real, more complete. She had unconsciously carried out the design of the composer, fulfilled all that could be fulfilled, perfected the mere music of Mozart's air. And, as in Mozart's air there was and could be (inasmuch as it

was purely beautiful) no page Cherubino, so also in her singing of the air there was none: Mozart had chosen, and she had abided by his choice.

Such is the little circle of fact and argument. We have seen what means the inherent nature of music afforded to composer and performer for the expression of Beaumarchais's Cherubino; and we have seen the composer, and the performer who was true to the composer, both choose, instead of expressing an equivocal jackanapes, to produce and complete a beautiful work of art. Were they right or were they wrong? Criticism, analysis, has said all it could, given all its explanations; artistic feeling only remains to judge, to condemn, or to praise: this one fact remains, that in the work of the great composer we have found only certain lovely patterns made out of sounds; but in them, or behind them, not a vestige of the page Cherubino.

VERNON LEE.

The Phantom Ox.

[In Norway it is a superstition among the peasants that a spectre in the form of a white ox glides through villages and farms, and that any person on whom he breathes will at once sicken and die.]

“WHAT frightens you in from your play, my child?
 Your cheeks are as white as snow,
 Your lips are pale, and your eyes are wild;
 Oh, why do you tremble so?”

“Dear mother, while I was wading the brook
 For lilies along the brink,
 A ghostly ox, with a deathly look,
 Came down to the stream to drink.

“The creature was not of flesh and bones,
 But paler than crystal glass:
 I saw through his body the trees, and stones,
 And mosses, and meadow-grass.

“He wander’d round, and, wherever he went,
 He stepp’d with so light a tread,
 No harebell under his hoof was bent,
 No violet bow’d its head.

“He cast no shadow upon the ground,
 No image upon the stream;
 His lowing was fainter than any sound
 That ever was heard in a dream.

“I quiver’d and quaked in every limb!
 I knew not whither to flee:
 The further away I shrank from him,
 The nearer he came to me.

"My handful of lilies he sniff'd and smelt;
His breath was chilly and fresh;
His horns, as they touch'd me softly, felt
Like icicles to my flesh.

"I shiver'd with cold, I burn'd with flame,
I call'd upon God and man;
But nobody heard, and nobody came,
And then I started and ran.

"I rush'd through the water across the brook,
And high on the shelving shore
I stopp'd and ventured to turn and look,
In hope to see him no more.

"He walk'd in my wake on the top of the flood
And follow'd me up the bank!
A blast from his nostrils froze my blood!
My spirit within me sank.

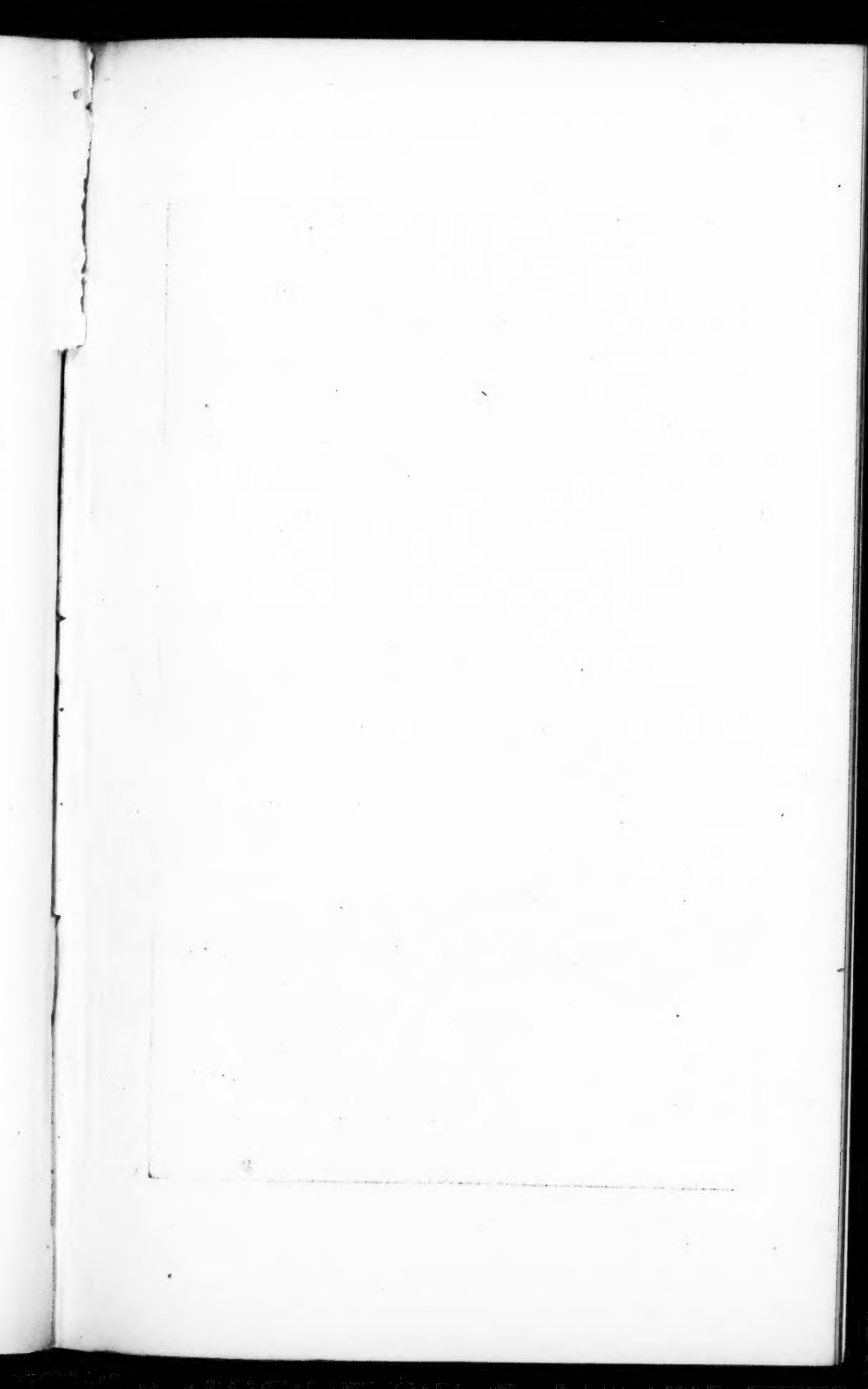
"I hid in the reeds, O mother dear,
But swift as a whiff of air
He follow'd me there! He follows me here!
He follows me everywhere!

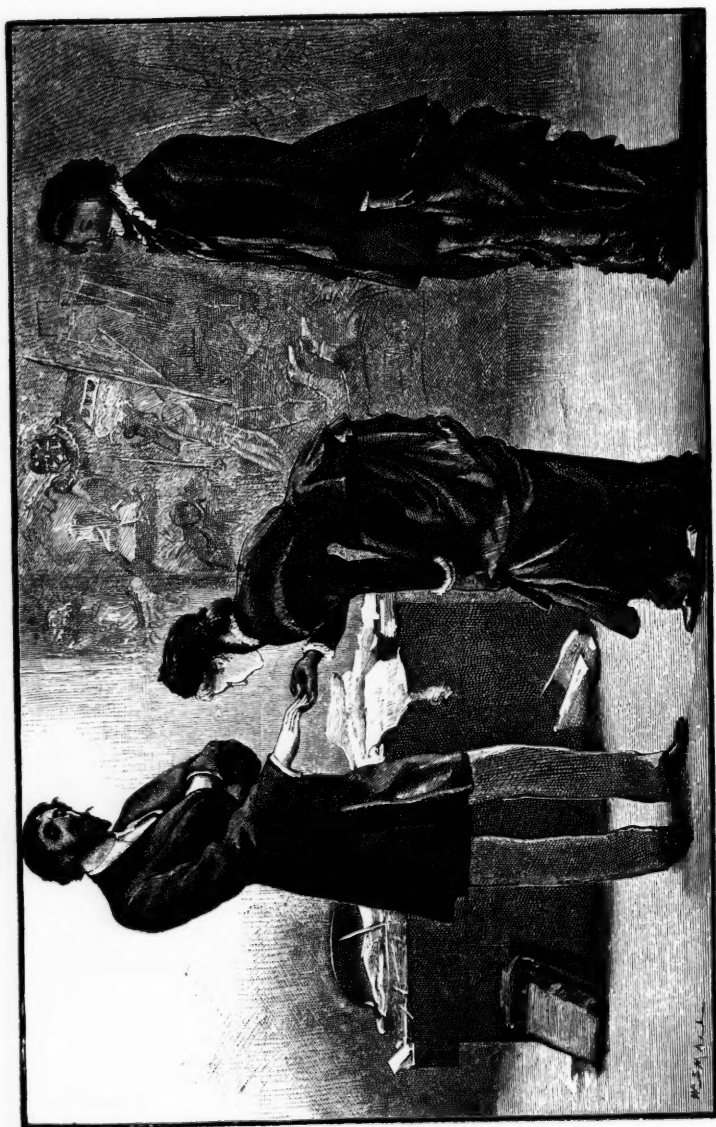
"Oh, frown at him, frighten him, drive him away!
He's coming in at the door!"
And down fell the lad in a swoon, and lay
At his mother's feet on the floor.

The mother look'd round her, dazed and dumb:
She saw but the empty air,
Yet knew, if the phantom ox had come,
The shadow of death was there.

She caught the pallid boy to her breast,
And pillow'd him on his bed;
The white-eyed moon kept watch in the west;
The beautiful child lay dead.

THEODORE TILTON.





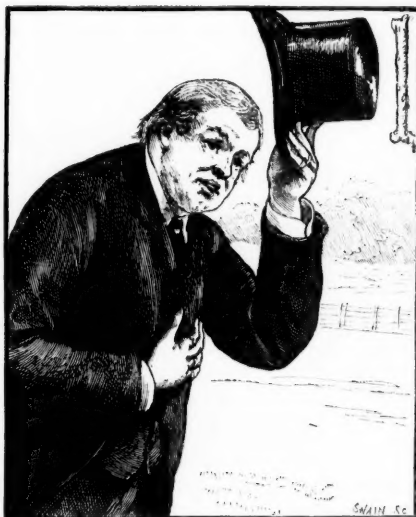
SHE TOOK HIS EXTENDED FINGERS AND RAISED THEM TO HER LIPS.

A Grape from a Thorn.

By JAMES PAYN.

CHAPTER XXXII.

MISS BURT.



IT might well be supposed that after refusing, on the score of physical disability, to see her friends, Ella might have excused herself from receiving a visit from a stranger. Something, however—she scarcely knew what—impelled her to make an exception in favour of Miss Burt, whose name she at once recognised as having been so sympathising a spectator at her father's funeral; she owed her something, at all events, for that mark of respect, and anything that had just now con-

nection with the dead man had force with her. The message Mrs. Trant had brought, that the lady had very particular business with her, no doubt also aroused her interest. In such a case as hers, to find any one associated with her lonely lot in any way was a matter of grave importance.

Since the interview seemed to promise to be of a private character, the Doctor and Mrs. Wallace had withdrawn, leaving Ella alone, pale and fragile-looking, but by no means embarrassed (for sorrow conquers shyness), to await her visitor. Of the lady whom Mrs. Trant presently ushered into her presence she could at first only remark that she was tall and slight, and dressed in almost as deep mourning as herself. It was not until the landlady had withdrawn that she raised her veil and disclosed a face of singular beauty. She was not, however, a young woman, nor were her good looks of the kind we are wont to associate

with youth; her delicate features bore the traces of sorrow of a far earlier date than that which now possessed them. For the moment, indeed, though her blue eyes were full of tears, one would have said that pity rather than sorrow held the chief place with her, to judge from the tenderness with which she addressed her young companion.

"I am come to you, my dear girl," she said, "unsought and unsummoned, in this your hour of trial, to offer you my loving help. My real name, as you doubtless know, is not what is written on that card, but Vallance."

Ella stared at her visitor in unfeigned astonishment. But for the earnestness of her tone and manner, she would certainly have had doubts of her sanity.

"Vallance!" repeated Ella thoughtfully, "Vallance! Now you mention the name, madam, it does seem to arouse some sense of association, but so vaguely that it takes no shape."

The visitor regarded her with a surprise as great as that which her own face had just expressed.

"Do you really mean to tell me, Miss Josceline, that the name of Vallance—Vallance—is unfamiliar to you?"

"Yes, madam; it is utterly unfamiliar. If it is the name, as I conclude, of some friend of my dear father's, I don't remember his ever speaking of it to me."

At these words Miss Burt sank back in her chair like one less astounded than shocked by some unlooked-for communication of woe; but after a moment or two she seemed to collect her energies, and, uttering a sigh of relief, observed, "Then at least he never spoke to you in disparagement of any person who bore that name?"

"Most certainly not."

"Did he never speak of—his—his connections or relations?"

"Very rarely. My father, unhappily, was not on good terms with them. They have always behaved towards him with neglect and coldness and disrespect."

"Indeed!"

The word was uttered so drily that it was impossible to mistake its significance.

"You would seem to say, madam," said Ella, with heightened colour, "that there were faults on both sides. I do not believe it; and in any case this is not the time to discuss the matter."

"Quite true, dear girl," answered the other gravely; "it is not the time for anything but gentleness and forgiveness and submission to God's will. As regards your father's relatives, the Joscelines, be assured that I am not come here as their advocate against him. I know little of them, and I care less. I only care for you."

"For me?" answered Ella wonderingly. "You are very kind to say so, but——"

"But why, you would ask," interrupted the other perceiving her

embarrassment, "are you thus addressed by one who is a stranger to you, and of whom, as it seems, you have never so much as heard? I hope I have some pity for those who are bereaved, since I have suffered the like sorrow. I hope I have some sympathy with those who are friendless, since I am friendless too; but it is no feeling of common humanity that brings me here. There is a tie between us, my dear girl, far closer than that. Is it possible that you can make no guess at what it is?"

Ella shook her head, but not in negation. Her limbs shook under her, her breath came thick and fast with the presentiment that she was on the brink of that revelation which all her life she had been yearning for, but had not dared to precipitate.

"Think, think again," said her companion gently; "there must be a problem in your mind that has often presented itself for explanation. Does the name of Vallance suggest nothing to you *now*?"

"Was it—was it—" faltered Ella, "my mother's name?"

"It was."

An ineffable tenderness and pity possessed the visitor's face as she said those words.

"And you?" inquired Ella, trembling in every limb. For the moment she thought it possible—just possible—that her mother herself (though Miss Steele had assured her that she was dead) might be standing before her. Upon reflection, however, she felt convinced that the schoolmistress would never have consented to assist in so cruel a deception.

"I am your mother's sister," said Miss Burt softly; "Hester Vallance. Kiss me, darling."

Her arms had opened wide, and Ella had thrown herself into them as she spoke, in a torrent of tears. The tidings she had just heard, coming so close upon the trying events of the morning, had been too much for her.

"Don't speak; don't try to speak," murmured the visitor tenderly; "sob out your sorrow on my bosom, darling, for it is loyal to you, and it is your natural home."

"But why, oh why?" murmured the girl, as she lay like a tired child in the other's arms, "did papa never mention you to me?"

"We will not talk about that now, my dear," answered the other in an altered tone; her voice had suddenly become frigid. "It is a long story; let it suffice for the present that we have found one another. Now tell me what are your plans?"

In as few words as possible Ella explained the circumstances of her position, and the generous and hospitable offer that had been made to her by Mrs. Wallace.

"You will, of course, do as you please, my dear," said her new-found relative; "but it is plain that I am your natural guardian, and, as it happens, I am able to offer you a home. My position, it is true, is but

a humble one. I am housekeeper to Mr. Charles Edward, of Barton Castle, but the situation is a very exceptional one. He lives a very secluded life, and leaves all domestic arrangements entirely in my hands. My visit to you is known to him, and the purpose of it. He knows who you are and who I am, and approves of the reasons which have caused me to pass under a feigned name. If you like to come and live with me—nominally as my assistant, and with a small but sufficient salary—I think I can make you happy. Of the happiness you will confer upon myself by such an arrangement I will not speak, because I wish you to make your choice without pressure. I will now leave you, that you may do so at your leisure and free from all embarrassment. Let me know your decision this evening, and to-morrow I shall return either to bid you good-bye, or to bring you back to what I hope will be your future home."

Under other circumstances it would naturally have occurred to Ella that so precipitate a leave-taking on the part of her visitor, after a revelation so important and astounding, was somewhat strange. Taking it in connection with the mystery so long surrounding her mother's identity, she might however have ascribed it to its true cause—a desire to avoid for the present all opportunity for asking questions; but as it was, the girl's relief at the prospect of being left alone with the thoughts and considerations that crowded in upon her overpowered all other considerations. She felt her aunt's proposal to be only of a piece with the delicacy and kindness that had distinguished her throughout the interview, and far from endeavouring to prolong it, she only sought to express her happiness and gratitude.

"I shall not be vexed, remember," were her visitor's last words, "if you should eventually decline my offer, and prefer that of older friends. On the other hand you must understand (though I am not just now at liberty to explain how this is) that I am offering you no menial position. You will be your own mistress—strange as it may appear to you—or nearly so, as much as you are at this moment. And I will only add that you will receive from me the welcome of a mother."

With one more affectionate, nay, passionate embrace, she was gone, leaving Ella in a tumult of expectations and apprehensions, such as might have resulted from the visit of a denizen of the other world. That some painful secret was connected with her dead mother she felt certain, or surely her new-found relative would have been less reticent concerning her; nor did it fail to strike her that her aunt had omitted to speak one word of condolence respecting her recent bereavement. This latter fact, however, she put down to a disinclination to open anew the floodgates of her grief. Her aunt had come to make a definite offer, to which it was necessary for her to say yea, or nay, within a few hours; and her object had naturally been to keep her mind free to deal with it, and as undisturbed by sentimental emotions as possible.

To Ella it was an inexpressible joy to find herself no longer the waif

and stray on the ocean of life that she had pictured herself ; to know that she had not lost, as she had imagined, the only tie that connected her with the human family. And had not Mrs. Wallace herself acknowledged, though so earnestly desirous that she should make her home with her, that the bond of kindred had a prior claim to that of friendship ? At Barton Castle she would be quite close to where they had laid him who had been, and still was, the dearest to her on earth, and living there she could pay him daily reverence. This perhaps just now was the reflection that weighed most with her. But she also remembered that Mr. Aird had announced his intention of visiting Foracre Farm, whereas at Barton Castle she would be free from the embarrassment of his presence. Moreover Mr. Edward, as it seemed, lived the life of a recluse, and the members of his household would necessarily pass their days in quiet and solitude, which for the present were of all things what she most desired. As for the duties in store for her, they would be welcome to her whatever they might be ; and in performing them to her uttermost she should give pleasure to her aunt, which would be reward enough. It had been one of her misgivings that at Foracre Farm she would be a useless appendage to the establishment, and perforce unable to repay in any way the hospitality that had been offered to her. Upon the whole she made up her mind to accept her aunt's proposal.

With any one but Mrs. Wallace she would have feared to appear ungracious in thus declining at the last moment her offer of a home, and even as it was the task was an embarrassing one. More than all she feared her friend would express a natural curiosity concerning Miss Burt—the reason of her change of name, &c.—and especially would seek to know on what account that lady had imitated Mr. Josceline's reticence with respect to his late wife. To Ella all reference to her mother was at once both hallowed and tender ground, and she shrank, though she scarce knew why, from treading on it. As it happened, however, Mrs. Armytage's vehement onslaught against the late Mr. Josceline in the ladies' drawing-room had put Mrs. Wallace on her guard. She was slow to believe in scandal at any time, and least of all when it was directed against her friends. But she felt it was possible there had been something wrong in the relations between Mr. Josceline and his wife, and her lips were therefore sealed as regarded any mention of her to Ella. As to the arrangement proposed by Miss Burt for Ella's future, Mrs. Wallace only regretted it on her own account, which in her case was always a subsidiary matter ; so far as her young friend was concerned, she rejoiced that she had found a relative and a home.

"And if upon acquaintance with them, my dear, you do not like them," she said tenderly, "remember that a loving welcome always awaits you at Foracre Farm. Of course it is a great disappointment to us ; I am afraid to say how great, because that might make you conceited," she added, smiling (the tears had risen to her eyes, and she wished to do away with their effect) ; "but it would be very selfish in

John and myself to wish matters otherwise, since you have now, you see, what it is always well to have, two strings to your bow."

What alone, therefore, now weighed upon Ella's mind with respect to her departure, was the saying "good-bye" to those who would fain have been her host and hostess, and the apparent ingratitude she was about to exhibit in leaving it unsaid to others. Her disinclination for any meeting with Mr. Aird was, however, so excessive, and the impossibility of omitting him, if she made an exception in favour of any one, so obvious, that to this latter resolve she adhered. Dr. Cooper had promised that he would make her excuses for her—not only with the authority and decision that his profession enabled him to do, but with every expression of kindness and gratitude; and with that assurance she would have had to be content, but for a happy thought suggested by little Davey. When the child came to wish her good-bye on the morning of her departure—an interview which affected her exceedingly, and would have done so still more could she have foreseen the future—she made him also a medium of acknowledgment to his father of the generosity he would have shown her, and of her thanks to his friends Felspar and Vernon for the many evidences of their goodwill.

At noon came her aunt with a closed carriage for her, in which she left for Barton; her life at the *Ultramarine*, until those last sad days, had been a very happy one, and to leave it and the friends she had made there cost her no small pain; yet if she had been going to Devon she felt that her grief would have been still more keen, for she would have been in that case leaving the dead as well as the living.

"Mrs. Trant tells me that you leave behind you many a well-wisher at Wallington, my dear," said her aunt, softly, as they wound down the hill to the village.

"Yes, yes," sobbed Ella, "every one at the hotel has been so kind." But she was not thinking only of those at the hotel.

Presently they passed Clover Cottage, at the door of which stood both its tenants, with bared heads and every appearance of sympathy and respect.

"Mr. Felspar I know by sight," said Miss Burt, as they passed by; "but who was that other young man, who showed such great feeling?"

"It was a Mr.—Mr. Vernon," stammered Ella.

Miss Burt regarded her young companion thoughtfully for a few minutes, and then said, "I fear you will find the Castle very dull, my dear, after the life you have been accustomed to lead. His Highness sees absolutely no company."

"His Highness?"

"Yes; by the bye, that is what he prefers to be called. Perhaps—though it is not absolutely necessary—you would not mind making use of the term just once—when you first see him; afterwards you can always call him 'Sir.'"

"But is he not Mr. Edwards?"

"Hush! not Edwards at all, the name is Edward; but that is only an incognito. I will tell you all about him presently; but if you don't mind very much, at your introduction to him, it would be a great point—a very great point indeed—if you would kiss his hand."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

BARTON CASTLE.

"If I don't mind it very much, I am to kiss his hand," was the thought that monopolised Ella's mind as the carriage passed through the lodge gates—unlocked to receive them, and closed and fastened directly they had entered—and drove through the broad avenue of oaks that led to Barton Castle. Who on earth, then, was this Mr. Edward to whose household she was about to belong, and what was the mystery in connection with him? From the gossip at Wallington she had only learnt that he was a recluse, kind and charitable to the poor, but always employing others to be his almoners; and that he lived in a sort of semi-state, though without seeing company of any kind. Her impression had been that he was an eccentric personage, who, having taken some unreasonable disgust to society, made use of his great wealth to render him entirely independent of it. She remembered the information which the postilion had given about him on their arrival, and it now recurred to her mind that her father had on that occasion shown a considerable interest in the man's relation of the matter, as though it had in some way concerned himself. Was it possible that he was aware that her mother's sister was living in the service of Mr. Edward? In that case she did not wonder at his reticence, for she well knew, notwithstanding his openly expressed contempt for the Joscelines, he had a great deal of family pride. And again, who was this Mr. Edward to whom a woman of culture and refinement, as her aunt evidently was, could play the housekeeper without, as it seemed, any sense of humiliation?

As she came in sight of the Castle, she saw the red flag flying on its midmost tower, which, as she now remembered, betokened (as though he were a royal personage) the presence of its tenant. For the moment, her recent loss, and the novel circumstances in which she had so suddenly and unexpectedly found herself, were lost sight of in an overmastering curiosity.

As the carriage drew up at the foot of the broad stone steps that led to the entrance of the Castle, two footmen in scarlet liveries appeared, as if jerked out by a spring, on either side of it, while a personage in sober black, but with knee-breeches, silk stockings, and shoes fastened by a silver buckle, came down to meet them.

"The groom of the chambers," whispered Miss Burt, in answer to

Ella's questioning glance, who, in her simplicity and amazement, was by no means certain that it was not His Highness himself.

This official conducted them into a noble hall, the walls of which were hung with ancestral pictures, alternated with armour and ancient weapons of all sorts. In the centre of it, as if to welcome them, stood a short thickset man in ordinary costume, except that his fingers were laden with more rings than is usual with the masculine sex. His brown hair, which was thin and lank, stuck closely to his blonde and pudgy face, like reeds about a cream cheese, and his whole appearance would have been vulgar, as it was certainly uncomely, but for a pair of brilliant brown eyes, which by their vivacity and intelligence went far to redeem it. For all that Ella knew, this again might have been the lord of the Castle himself—it was like opening a present packed with layer after layer of paper, each of which to the curious recipient appears to be the final one—but her doubts on this point were once more dispelled by her companion, who introduced the personage in question as “Mr. Heyton, His Highness's secretary.”

It did not escape Ella's natural quickness, stimulated as it was by curiosity, that her aunt's tone was stiff and frigid; moreover, she noticed that her introducer made no mention of her being her niece. As Miss Burt's manner in other respects conveyed no sense of disparity of rank on either side, Ella justly concluded that Mr. Edward's housekeeper (if such indeed was her aunt's position at the Castle) was not on friendly terms with Mr. Edward's secretary. Mr. Heyton's manner, on the other hand, was studiously polite and even effusive. His voice was soft and low, and he had a way of placing his white plump glistening hand on the region of his heart as he spoke, that gave a sort of dramatic earnestness to what would have been otherwise small talk.

“You have brought the sunshine with you, Miss Josceline, as indeed,” he added, with a parenthetic bow, “might only be expected. You could scarcely have seen the Castle for the first time under more favourable circumstances.”

“The park looked very beautiful as we came along,” replied Ella, scarce knowing what she said; for Mr. Heyton's keen and penetrating eyes gave her at least as much discomfort and embarrassment as did his compliment.

“It is fortunate that Barton possesses some natural beauties,” continued the secretary, “since it has little else to interest the visitor. I am afraid after the changeful society at the *Ultramarine* that you will find our life here very insipid. We must, however, do our best to afford you some amusement.”

“Miss Josceline is not just now in a mood for amusement, nor even to make new acquaintances,” observed Miss Burt with severity. “You do not appear to comprehend that she is suffering from a recent bereavement.”

“Pardon me,” returned Mr. Heyton, in a tone at once unabashed

and cheerful ; "there is no one," and here he touched his heart, "who deplores it more than myself. But, in my poor judgment, it is better in such sad circumstances to endeavour to distract the mind by innocent and wholesome enjoyments."

"Has His Highness expressed a wish to see Miss Josceline?" inquired Miss Burt, without taking any notice of this recipe for depressed spirits, and speaking even more scornfully than before.

"If it is quite convenient to her, I have his orders to introduce her at once," and he turned to Ella as if to consult her wishes.

"Nay," said Miss Burt firmly, "I must claim for once to usurp your office, Mr. Heyton, and to conduct Miss Josceline to his presence myself."

With a significant pressure on Ella's arm, she led her to a door at the extremity of the hall. It stood in shadow ; but Ella noticed it was surmounted by a small gilt coronet. Miss Burt knocked sharply on one of its carved panels, and a voice within bade them enter.

The room to which they had thus gained admittance was somewhat remarkable. Its one window, which would otherwise have commanded the park, was entirely composed of painted glass, diffusing a sort of gaudy gloom ; the walls were lined with ancient tapestry, which still further subdued the light ; so that had it not been for some assistance from a skylight, itself concealed by a horizontal curtain of white silk, the objects in the apartment would hardly have been discernible. As it was, the rays from above were concentrated in a peculiar manner at the far end of the room, so as to bring out in strong relief the figure of its solitary tenant. This was a man of about five-and-forty years of age, of swarthy complexion, and with grave and glittering eyes. He had been seated at a desk covered with ancient parchments, from which he rose with dignity as the ladies entered, and came forward a few steps to meet them.

"Your Highness, this is my niece, Miss Josceline, of whom I have had the honour to speak to you."

Mr. Edward (to use the only name by which the tenant of Barton Castle was known to his neighbours) turned on the young girl a compassionate look, which would have been almost parental save for a certain touch of condescension, and held out a large white hand.

Perhaps, in her confusion, Ella forgot the injunction that had been laid on her, or it might be that her pride revolted against obeying it ; but, instead of kissing the proffered hand, she held out her own to meet it.

Mr. Edward smiled good-naturedly, as a grown person might do at a child's mistake, and pressed her fingers warmly.

"I am acquainted," he said, in tender, though somewhat sonorous tones, "with your recent loss, Miss Josceline, and beg of you to be assured of my most sincere sympathy. In the quiet of Barton, and in the loving custody of your aunt, I trust you will recover in time your

health and spirits. For the present, as you have doubtless been informed, we are living in great retirement, such as is hardly suitable, I fear, to youth and beauty."

"It is most suitable, Sir, to me," said Ella quietly, "and will be very welcome."

The compliment he had paid her, though similar to that of his secretary, did not give her the same offence. The air and manner of the speaker was stately and measured, while his words seemed to partake of the nature of a general sentiment rather than to have any personal application.

"I am deeply grateful," she added, "that through my aunt's good offices you have been so good as to offer me——" She hesitated; for, in fact, she did not know what had been offered her, and she could not bring herself to say "a situation," as though she were the new housemaid.

"Let us say a home," put in Mr. Edward kindly, "if, as we hope, we shall be able to make it appear such. Miss Burt has, I hope, made it plain to you that you will be our guest so long as it suits you to remain at Barton Castle."

"You are most kind—most generous, Sir," said Ella, deeply touched by the other's delicacy and consideration; "but I trust——" she was about to add some equivalent, which in her confusion she could not find, for the expression of a hope that she might be of some assistance to her aunt, when that lady pulled her by the sleeve. She then perceived that her host was once more holding out his hand to her, no doubt to indicate that the interview was over. With a sudden impulse, born less of gratitude than the desire to please, she took his extended fingers, and raised them to her lips.

Mr. Edward smiled at her more benignly than ever. "The members of my household," he said (in a tone that might have implied there were two hundred instead of two of them) "generally associate together; but you will keep to your own apartments or not, as you please, Miss Josceline."

Ella felt herself gently pulled from behind, and, yielding to the pressure, she mechanically did what her relative did by design—namely, backed, as from a presentation at Court, out of their host's presence.

Overcome by contending emotions, some of them serious enough, but the very seriousness of which by the strong sense of contrast heightened the absurdity of her position, no sooner had the door closed behind her than Ella broke into a little laugh, which had at least as much of hysterics as of mirth in it.

"Hush! hush!" cried Miss Burt earnestly.

"But, my dear aunt, it was so very funny, that giving me his hand to kiss, and our going out of the room backwards."

"Still, my dear, when you are as old as I am," replied her companion gravely, "you will have learnt that kindness and delicacy are much too

rare in this world—no matter by what weaknesses they may be accompanied—to afford a subject of ridicule. The man you have just seen is one of the noblest and most generous of created beings. It does seem strange, no doubt," she added, very gently. "I do not blame you for thinking him a little mad; but, oh! my dear, if all the sane people had but half his virtues, this earth would be far more like heaven. But walls have ears in this house. Come in here, my darling, where we shall be always quite private, and I'll tell you all about him."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

A REVELATION.

"WHAT a lovely little room!" was Ella's first exclamation on being introduced to an apartment the beauty of which compelled her admiration, consumed though she was with curiosity to learn the history of her mysterious host; "you don't mean to say that I may always sit here with you alone."

"You may when you wish me to come and see you," returned Miss Burt, all sign of distress swept from her pleasant face, and replaced by that best of expressions, the sense of having given pleasure to another; "it is your own private snugery, my dear, and no one else's."

"Mine! what, this lovely sitting room!" She looked round with delight upon the well-filled bookcases that lined the walls, the fresh flowers upon the table, and the piano with its layers of music-books. "Oh, how can I thank you enough, Aunt Hester?"

"You can thank me best," answered the other, with glistening eyes, "by being happy here; only remember it is not I to whom you are indebted. I have only had the arrangement of matters."

"Yes, but with what forethought and kindness you have arranged them! This is the outlook"—she pointed to the window, which, though it had the park for a foreground, commanded a side view of the village churchyard—"which of all others in this world I should have preferred. While sitting here, I can still fancy myself near my dear father."

"That, however, was not the reason why I placed you here," observed the other. Her tone was so peculiar that Ella looked about her in amazement. "That is, my dear," continued her aunt very gently, "it was no portion of my plan for your happiness to keep alive in your mind any sad memories. I chose the room because it has a north aspect, which is most suitable for painting, and a little bird has told me that you are an artist."

"The little bird must have had a very flattering note," replied Ella, smiling: "but if locality and surroundings make the artist, I ought to be a credit to the profession. It is a bower for a princess. What lovely flowers, and what beautiful books! Why have they all a coronet upon them?"

"It is not a coronet, my dear, it is a crown," returned Miss Burt, with a gravity that seemed quite out of proportion with the rectification of so slight an error; "and that forms a portion of what I have now to tell you. Did you ever hear the story of the infant Stuart of St. Rosalie?"

"Never."

"Well, briefly, there are some who maintain that the Young Pretender as he was called, Charles Edward"—she hung for a moment on these two words—"left behind him a legal heir, by his wife, the Princess Louisa Maximiliana de Stolberg. This child is said to have been brought to England, where he grew up and married. It was a *mésalliance* in one sense, of course, supposing him to have been the man he was affirmed to be, but the union was a legal one, and had issue in one son. The family, the heads of which are known as the Comtes d'Albanie, is not the only one which assumes to be descended from him. Mr. Charles Edward—for so he chooses to be called by the outside world, instead of by his patronymic of Stuart—claims to be no other than the great-grandson of the Young Pretender, and heir to the English throne."

"Gracious goodness!" ejaculated poor Ella. The exclamation fell very short of her amazement, and was, she felt, sadly commonplace, and altogether inadequate to the occasion. "Does he think he is the King of England?"

"*De jure*, yes: he is as certain of it as that he has breath in his body."

"And do you believe it, Aunt Hester?"

"Don't ask me, darling. I can only say that I try not to disbelieve it. Of one thing I am sure, that no more noble and princely heart ever beat in human breast than that of the man I speak of; he is generosity itself, and possesses every other attribute that may become a king."

"Then that's why you call him His Highness, and wanted me to kiss his hand?" observed the wondering girl; her astonishment at her host's pretensions preventing her for the moment from paying attention to the other's eulogium on his virtues.

"Yes, I thought it was better for you to do it, if possible, before you knew the reason, for fear—well, I am sure you would not have laughed about it if I had told you how deeply—and being so good a man—he takes the thing to heart; but now for my sake, darling, for my sake——"

"I am not going to laugh, Aunt Hester, I am not indeed," said Ella assuringly, though only too conscious that she was on the confines of laughter.

"I was afraid you were, my dear; you looked like it; and of course people do laugh, who don't know His Highness, when they hear him spoken of by that name for the first time. Up to this point I am sure you have behaved admirably. I never knew him so taken with anybody

as he seemed to be with you, and it's only the first time that he insists—not, however, that he is at all exacting—on having what he considers the proper marks of respect paid to him. And you did pay them, most gracefully and most naturally I am sure.”

“But I am not sure that it was right,” said Ella doubtfully; “it is surely very hypocritical——”

“That is just why I didn't tell you,” interrupted her companion naïvely. “She has such an independent spirit,” I said to myself, “that if she knows, and doubts (and I don't mean to say doubting is not natural, at all events till you come to know him), she will never stoop to flatter him. But if she doesn't know, and only wishes to please him, and since to kiss his hand is so very simple—don't you see?”

“I am afraid, Aunt Hester, you are not very simple,” said Ella, smiling, “but, on the contrary, very artful and diplomatic. I don't believe I could ever have brought myself to do it—I think not, I hope not—if I had thought I was flattering his credulity.”

“Nay, dear child, it is not that,” returned the other earnestly. “Nothing that you could say or do, or that anybody else could say or do, or omit saying or doing, would make the slightest difference to his own convictions on the matter. He may be wrong, but in the faith that he is the last of the Stuarts, and their only lineal descendant, he is fixed, and will die in it.”

“But, my dear aunt, he must know at least that other people are not of that opinion?”

“He knows that the outside world are not, and has therefore cut himself off from them.”

“But the inside world?” persisted Ella; “does he suppose that the members of his household, as he calls them, believe him to be Charles Edward Stuart?”

“Most certainly he does.”

“And do they believe him to be so? I do not speak of yourself, of course,” put in Ella quickly, perceiving a look of distress and pain flit over her companion's face; “you have already explained to me your own position. But do those who are not so easily moved to admiration by his good qualities, who are not so susceptible of gratitude, and not so anxious to confer happiness on others, as you are—let us take Mr. Heyton for example——”

“How do you know that Mr. Heyton is not susceptible of gratitude?” put in her companion keenly.

“I did not say that, my dear aunt; I was only speaking comparatively, though I should certainly think he was not given to enthusiasm; he seemed to me, I must confess, somewhat affected and finical.”

“He did, did he?” replied Miss Burt with a quiet smile. “You come to your conclusions—though, mind you, I don't say you are wrong in this particular case—very rapidly, my dear.”

"Nay, it is only an impression, not a conclusion. But you have not answered my question yet. Does Mr. Heyton—His Highness's own secretary—believe in these pretensions?"

"You had better ask him yourself," answered Miss Burt evasively. "I will say, however, if His Highness's claims were acknowledged—his rank a matter of public notoriety—Mr. Heyton could not treat him with more outward reverence. It is he who helps to make things stiffer and more formal here than they otherwise would be. If his master were a mere dreamer, in fact, which is not the case, you would say that he encouraged him in his hallucinations."

"I see; he humours him like the prince in the play, to the top of his bent."

"I would not say that, my dear," answered Miss Burt reproachfully. "His Highness, unlike Hamlet, is neither mad nor does he pretend to be so; and as for Mr. Heyton, it is not for me to look into his heart."

"And the servants?"

"They know nothing. They are highly paid for an exceptional service, and they perform it. Perhaps the mystery that surrounds their master invests him with as much respect as though they were convinced of his claims. You are quite right to endeavour to ascertain how matters stand here, my dear," she continued kindly; "it is necessary to your own position that you should do so. If anything is still on your mind, as I think it is, pray give expression to it; it will not offend me."

"Indeed, Aunt Hester, I have asked questions enough, when it was rather my place to have been silent, and to have taken with thankfulness what your kindness has provided me with; but everything is so new, and strange, and unexpected, and—and—I am not quite sure that—that——"

"You mean you are not quite sure, my dear," interrupted her companion quietly, "that in remaining here and accepting His Highness's hospitality, you are not doing wrong?"

"That is just what I wanted to say," said Ella, "though it seems so ungracious, and—and——"

"Such a reflection on myself, you mean, my dear," observed her companion, again coming to the rescue. "What you feel, but do not like to express, for fear of wounding my feelings, is that you are accepting His Highness's hospitality under false pretences. Now let me put you right on that point. You are doing nothing of the kind. His Highness knows, as well as I do, that you do not as yet believe in him. He may be a fanatic or a visionary (though, as I have said, in my opinion he is neither), but no one who knows him can think him to be a fool. What he hopes is that in time you may become a convert to his views."

"That he ought to be the King of England?" ejaculated Ella. "Oh dear me! I could never think that."

"Nor need you, my dear," continued the other earnestly. "It is even doubtful whether he goes so far as that himself. It is a mere question of evidence in connection with the St. Rosalie story. Even if that is true, he is at most the last of the Stuarts, just as Cardinal York was thought to be before him. Do not suppose, my dear child, that the scruples you entertain did not at one time occur to me also; but I am thankful to say they exist no longer, and I do my duty without a prick of conscience. It is true, however, that I am under the greatest obligations to His Highness. The opportunity of entering his service was offered me at a most opportune time, and in the most gracious manner; and his kindness to me then and since has been excessive."

"That, of course, makes a difference," said Ella thoughtfully. She could well imagine that a sensitive and affectionate person like her companion, naturally free from scepticism, could easily bring herself to believe in those she loved. "Would it be an impertinence to ask, Aunt Hester, how it was that you first became acquainted with—with His Highness?"

"It is certainly no impertinence, my dear," answered the other gravely. "Indeed, sooner or later I felt that you must needs put that question; but, for the present, let it suffice to say that the circumstances under which I was first introduced to him were painful and peculiar. I came to him—not, indeed, under a false pretence, for I told him all—but under a false name, in consequence of a domestic calamity, and in seeking for a livelihood and seclusion I found a competence and a home."

"Had the domestic calamity, Aunt Hester," inquired Ella, in hesitating tones, "anything to do with my mother?"

"Yes."

Only that one word, but freighted with enough tenderness and sorrow to have sufficed for a new *In Memoriam*.

"May I not ask about her?" inquired Ella pitifully, her face as white as the dawn, and with a shiver as though "the breeze from out the distant gloom" were stealing over her. "May I not ask about my own mother?"

"It is better not, my darling; only pain can come of it."

Ella bowed her head, and was silent for many minutes. The secret of her father's silence concerning her mother had at last, then, been revealed to her. Oh, fatal curiosity! how far better it would have been for her to have died and never known it! How many tender fancies, how many self-imagined memories, had once filled her heart! She only knew now that they had been rudely shattered. "Let me know the worst," she presently said, in a low and husky voice.

"The worst?" answered her companion, with a look of distress and horror. "The worst of whom?"

"Of my—my mother."

"The worst of her?" exclaimed Aunt Hester, with passionate

vehemence; "you must be mad, child. There is no worst. There was no bad connected with her from first to last; she was the best, and purest, and most long-suffering of women; and she is now an angel in heaven."

Ella threw herself on her knees, and, with a sharp cry of pain, laid her face in Aunt Hester's lap.

"Oh, how wicked I have been!" she sobbed. "How wicked, and how vile, to have entertained a thought of ill of her who bore me!"

Aunt Hester looked down on her with an indescribable gentleness, and softly smoothed the wandering tresses that hung about her knees.

"It is a sad and shameful story, darling; but the sadness was your mother's, and the shame—another's. She suffered from the slander of evil tongues; but she was sinned against, not sinning. Let us not think of it—let us not speak of it."

Alas! it is easy to say "let us not think" of this or that; but there are thoughts which have more force than deeds with us, and are far more importunate. Ella's mind had indeed been relieved of one burthen—the terrible suspicion of the wrongdoing of the mother she had never known; but it had been replaced by one of almost equal weight, the conviction of the wrongdoing of the father whom she had known.

"Were papa—and mamma—separated?" she presently whispered; "actually separated?"

"She obtained a divorce from him," was the reply, in a tone which implied compassion indeed, but also the desire of the speaker to be quite distinct upon that matter. "It was then that she came to live with me. Our love had passed the love of sisters, but in an evil hour she had exchanged it for—— No matter; it was always hers, and waited for her. I changed the name which had once been hers (because she wished it), to avoid recognition and to efface the past. She died when you were an unconscious infant, in these loving arms; but her heart was with you to the last. 'My poor child!' were her last words."

"God help me! What am I to think—what am I to do?" cried Ella despairingly.

"Imitate her goodness, my darling; revere her memory," returned Aunt Hester. "You can do nothing more, and she needs nothing, being in heaven, where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest." She stooped down and kissed her niece's cheek. "I will leave you for a little to yourself," she said. "This is the last time I shall speak about the past, my child. If I could have spared you, I would have done so; but the truth had to be told."

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE CHURCHYARD.

Is there anything worse than loss?—

To say he has departed,
His voice, his face is gone—
To feel impatient-hearted,
Yet know we must bear on.

Is not that the very climax of human woe? To most of us, thank heaven, it is so; but to some few exceptional sufferers there is a still more bitter drop to be drained from the cup of life. It is the conviction forced upon us, after the loved one's death, that he was not so worthy as we had thought him. Ella Josceline was by nature too sensible, by habit too truthful, by disposition too genuine, to have made for herself a picture of her father's character, even though he was lost to her, of the saintly or even the sentimental sort. She was aware that he had been a man of the world, and though she did not know all that is signified by that term (nor the tenth of it), she knew enough to dispel the mere conventional filial illusions. On the other hand, she had not only admired him and felt a pride in him, but had loved him for his own sake, quite independently of the love he had borne to her, and which had been naturally reciprocated. Whatever might have been his faults—and she had admitted to herself the probability of their existence—she had always believed him kind; and now that he was in his grave, and all his acts and words of love for her were fresh in her memory (which, indeed, as respected herself, retained nothing to his disadvantage), she had been suddenly given to understand that it was not so—that, in a word, he had been cruel, faithless, and, where it behoved him to have sought forgiveness, implacable and vindictive. For that he had maintained so ominous a reticence concerning his married life from shame or self-reproach, she knew him better than to believe; and if she did not give credit to the charge brought against him, she must needs believe that in some measure, if it were but as regarded “incompatibility of temper”—vague term, but significant of so much—her own mother was to blame. At the moment, she was unaware that her father had once been a clergyman, who had been disgraced; but it is doubtful whether that revelation could have increased the sum of her present sorrow. To her thought, the desecration of the office would have sunk into insignificance beside the disgrace of the man. If he had disregarded the most sacred of human feelings—made his own wife miserable, his own home desolate—that his ministration at the altar should have been a profanation and ineffectual would have followed as a matter of course.

For a time, the charge against her father, doubling as it did her sense of recent bereavement (for it seemed to her that she was losing

him, or, rather, what she had thought to be him, a second time), overwhelmed the girl almost utterly; but by degrees the "low beginnings," not indeed "of content," but of comfort, began to stir within her. She reflected that her aunt was the kin of the one party in this sad dispute, and the antagonist, in all probability from the very first, of the other; and, without disloyalty to her mother, she was able to convince herself that if the conduct of her father had not been represented to her in a partisan light, it had at all events been exaggerated and made the worst of. And yet, so strong was her sense of justice, that she felt no indignation against Aunt Hester for the colouring which this suggestion presupposed her to have put upon the unhappy history of her parents. It was only natural that she should have seen all the virtues of the one and all the shortcomings of the other. As for herself, the best, and indeed the only course that was left to her, was to dismiss from her mind as far as possible this evil record of the past, to cling to the good of which she had been told, and to the good of which she had had experience, and to forget the sorrow of the one parent and the shame of the other. Were they not both in heaven, as she hoped and believed, reunited and reconciled? Why, then, should she think of them as separated and antagonistic?

To this resolve—difficult and austere, it may here be said—she in the main adhered, and it had this immediate advantage, that it withdrew her mind from the morbid contemplation of death and loss, and forced it into other channels. To her aunt it seemed that the girl had wonderfully soon "got over" her trouble, which that lady ascribed to the conviction produced by her own arguments that the late Mr. Josceline was not a person whose society was, on the whole, to be grudged to the angels—in which matter she much misjudged her niece.

On this very occasion, indeed, when the tumult of her emotions had subsided, Ella's first act on leaving her room was to let herself out by a postern door, which her aunt had indicated to her, and which opened into the park, and take her way to the churchyard. Under the shadow of God's house, and beneath the tender sky, it would be hard indeed if any disparaging thoughts should intrude upon her concerning the dead who lay there; nor did they do so. On the other hand, her reflections did not wholly confine themselves to the channel that she had in a manner marked out for them. There is no doubt that it is conventional persons who chiefly possess the advantage of keeping their spiritual thoughts under control; the people whom the apostle rather brusquely expresses himself as being "ashamed of," because of their respect for times and for seasons—saints' days and Sundays—form, after all, the bulk of our respectable church and chapel goers. As soon as they find themselves in the "sacred edifice," as they term it, their thoughts mechanically detach themselves from worldly matters, and shoot heavenwards, though not perhaps to any great altitude, as though from a springboard. Such a disposition of mind seems to me as enviable as

it is commendable; but it is certain that others, who are occasionally at least capable of much higher flights of devotion, do not share this gift. They find a difficulty in being religious of malice aforethought, as the law terms it. The presence of a bird in the church, or even a butterfly, is fatal to them; at the sight of the many-hued intruder their mind flies to the scheme of creation, with its wonders and its beauties, with its mysteries and its contradictions; they cannot for their lives follow, as they would fain do, the Rev. Mr. Poundtext in his exposition (not altogether novel, perhaps) of "Fate, freewill, foreknowledge absolute." On an Ash Wednesday they are unable to feel any wickeder than they did before Lent began; while on the other hand, on the most cheerful of the Church's festivals they may be bowed down with remorse and penitence. In this respect the character of Ella Josceline was sadly wanting. She had an "undisciplined mind," otherwise it would surely not have happened that, standing by her father's grave, with her heart, as it were, swept and garnished and prepared for the reception of heavenly thoughts, it should suddenly have received worldly tenants. Yet the first thing that struck her as she gazed upon the fresh-turned turf was that it was strewn with flowers, and the first question that she put to herself, so far from being a soul-searching one of the proper kind, was "Whose hand could have placed them there?" She had herself, on her way through the park, gathered a few wild flowers with that pious purpose; not that the Hon. George Emilius Josceline had greatly cared for wild flowers during his lifetime, or had presumably changed his tastes in the interim, but simply that they were all that she had to give, and that they seemed in some vague and gracious way to express her filial love. But the tribute which had been already paid was of another and far more costly kind—the rarest and purest treasures of the conservatory—camellias, azaleas, and lilies of virgin whiteness, but with the very name of which she was unacquainted. What pious hand could have done her father such rich reverence? That it was not Aunt Hester she felt certain; at the best, her relative had only displayed towards him a cold indifference—at the worst, an ill-concealed antagonism. Was it, could it be the same hand which yesterday had done the like—that of Mr. Vernon? The colour rushed into her pale face as this suggestion occurred to her, and her heart beat with quicker throbs. It was curious that she never thought of Mr. Felspar, though she had been informed that the earlier gift had come from Clover Cottage, and had therefore in all probability been a joint contribution from the two young men. The next moment, however, it struck her that not only in the former case had the flowers been of the common garden kind, but that at Wallington camellias and azaleas were unattainable. In the Castle alone, where there was doubtless a conservatory, could they be procured, and therefore from the Castle they must have come. They were doubtless, then, a gift from His Highness.

To some minds this would have seemed a delicate attention; but to

Ella, although she acknowledged the kindness of the act, it was on the whole displeasing. From Mr. Vernon, who had known her father, such a tribute was touching and grateful; but from a stranger's hand it was far otherwise. There was something, too—though it only vaguely presented itself to her mind—of unhappy appropriateness in these costly blossoms; unlike the simple wild flowers she had gathered, and which they seemed to flaunt as a high-born beauty despises the daughter of the fields, they were of artificial growth, as the character—and especially the faults—of her father had been. Fashion and splendour had never been welcome to her, but they had now become hateful. She felt doubtful whether, no matter under what easy conditions, she could live long in yonder Castle, surrounded with pomp and stateliness, although the glitter was of tinsel. The thought of homely Mrs. Wallace and of that farmhouse in Devonshire came over her like a breath of fresh air. But upon that home she had no claim; whereas upon this one she had a sort of right by proxy, so far as her aunt's services to its lord entitled her to it. What she yearned for was independence, and this could be only gained by her own exertions. "Work! work!" was now the one cry of her bruised heart. In work she might forget her sorrows, and begin life anew; and she felt that she ought to be grateful for the asylum that had been offered to her, and where the leisure and opportunity for study would at least be hers. In the rapid glance she had cast at the bookcase in her sitting-room, she had noticed that it had included some works on perspective and figure drawing, and to these she resolved to apply herself. She felt a hunger at her heart to be up and doing, such as rarely comes to a young girl; and yet she had been orphaned but one short week. The luxury of grief was denied to her, as it is always denied to those who are poor. Henceforward, not death, but life, and how to make her way in it, was to be the matter for her thoughts. Such was the frame of mind in which Ella Josceline turned away from her father's grave. If Mrs. Armytage had been aware of it, she would have sarcastically termed it a "very pretty" one; but it was not poor Ella's fault, but the force of circumstances, that restrained her emotions within such very moderate limits. Her ears and eyes, and her powers of mental observation, were as alive to all that passed about her as though they had never known the torpor of bereavement. Her way back to the postern was a footpath, which, after it left the churchyard, was intersected by another that led to the front of the Castle; along this second path there was coming some person whom, as they approached one another, she made out to be Mr. Heyton. She had no wish to meet him, and therefore moved more slowly that he might pass by, on his way up the park, before she reached the intersection; but, to her annoyance, he decreased his own speed so as exactly to meet her. This was bad taste in him, she thought, considering that, seeing her come from the churchyard, he might so easily have guessed her late errand. But Mr. Heyton's expression did not wear by any means the expression of one who had, or could have had, bad taste im-

puted to him; it was one of serene but affable self-complacency. He raised his hat a few inches, with gradual grace, and murmured a hope that the beauty of Barton Park came up to Miss Josceline's expectation.

"It is a lovely spot," she said.

"Hitherto," he continued, "our home landscape has lacked a fitting figure in the foreground to set off its beauties. It now possesses one."

For the moment Ella felt inclined to be indignant, but the air of the man was so exaggerated, and the manner in which his right hand sought his heart so dramatically droll, that it was almost impossible to be seriously offended with him. Her view of the case was that His Highness's secretary, having no belief in the genuineness of his master's pretensions, found it necessary to "make believe very much," and to practise courtly airs and graces on every opportunity, in order to keep up his *rôle*.

"I should have thought," said Ella gravely, "that the best figures in the foreground of a park were herds of deer, such as the pretty creatures I see yonder."

"You may call them pretty creatures," said Mr. Heyton, with irritation, "but handsome is as handsome does, and some of them are not nearly so nice as they look. There are half a dozen as savage beasts among them as you may find in the Zoological Gardens, and more than once, but for my personal agility, my life would have been sacrificed to their fury."

"Indeed!" said Ella. The word was not a very sympathetic one, but the fact was, the idea of Mr. Heyton—a gentleman certainly stout and pudgy, and presumably short-winded—pursued by stags, and escaping from them by reason of his superior speed, was so exceedingly striking and incongruous, that she could hardly keep her countenance.

"Yes," he resumed; "most persons would have had enough of it, and not ventured in the park again; and indeed it would be no great punishment if at Barton one's home walks were restricted to the private gardens. By the bye, you have not seen the gardens? It is His Highness's wish that you should make use of them. Permit me to be your cicerone. It won't take you ten minutes," he added, as Ella hesitated.

The offer was by no means attractive to her, and she would have much preferred that her aunt should have introduced her to the beauties of her new home rather than Mr. Heyton; but his intention was evidently to be civil to her, and it was just as well not to behave in any way that could be construed as churlish by her new acquaintance. She therefore expressed her thanks and agreed to his proposition.

"The gardens are in this direction," he said, pursuing the path by which he had already come; "they were placed at some little distance from the Castle for the accommodation of its previous tenant, who" (here a cynical smile came over his face) "was afflicted with hallucinations."

"But I thought I saw the gardens on the right as we drove up this morning," remarked Ella, not a little surprised.

"The public gardens, yes; they of course can be seen by anybody. It is only, however, His Highness and the members of his suite who have access to these I shall have the honour to show you. They are unique in their way. There is the wall that surrounds them; pretty tallish, you will observe, so that De Lunatico, as I will call him——"

"Call who?" inquired Ella, surprised out of her grammar, for the secretary's tone had been so significantly sly that she could hardly resist the conviction that he was referring to his employer.

"Well, let us say, the last tenant of the Castle," was the cool reply; "he was put in an asylum at last, you know, but in the meanwhile they tried rest and seclusion, which only made him worse; it does in some cases."

And Mr. Heyton turned his twinkling eyes, as though they had flashed from a dark lantern, full upon Ella's face. She had no doubt in her own mind that he was experimentalising upon her; trying to see how far her faith extended with regard to the pretensions of her host, or perhaps seeking to entrap her into an expression of incredulity.

"I never heard that they had that effect," she answered with an indifferent air.

Mr. Heyton gave a short little laugh, which said as plainly as laugh could speak, "Dear me, how cautious we are!" and opened the garden door.

